PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 434 (Part 2)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2005–06

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Chronology of The Parliamentary Debates

The Parliamentary History contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almons Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c. &c.

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Adams, Gerry (Belfast, West)
Afriyie, Adam (Windsor)
Ainger, Nicholas Richard (Carmarthen, West and South Pembrokeshire)
Ainsworth, Peter Michael (East Surrey)
Ainsworth, Rt. Hon. Robert William (Coventry, North-East)
Alexander, Daniel Grian (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey)
Alexander, Douglas Garven (Paisley and Renfrewshire, South)
Allen, Graham William (Nottingham, North)
Amess, David Anthony Andrew (Southend, West)
Ancram, Rt. Hon. Michael Andrew (Devizes)
Anderson, David (Blaydon)
Anderson, Janet (Rossendale and Darwen)
Arbuthnot, Rt. Hon. James Norwich (North-East Hampshire)
Armstrong, Rt. Hon. Hilary Jane (North-West Durham)
Atkins, Charlotte Jean (Staffordshire, Moorlands)
Atkinson, Peter Landreth (Hexham)
Austin, Ian Christopher (Dudley, North)
Austin, John Eric (Erith and Thamesmead)

B

Bacon, Richard Michael (South Norfolk)
Bailey, Adrian Edward (West Bromwich, West)
Baird, Vera (Redcar)
Baker, Norman John (Lewes)
Baldry, Antony Brian (Banbury)
Balls, Edward Michael (Normanton)
Banks, Gordon Raymond (Ochil and South Perthshire)
Barker, Gregory Leonard George (Bexhill and Battle)
Barlow, Celia Anne (Hove)
Baron, John Charles (Billericay)
Barrett, John Andrew (Edinburgh, West)
Barron, Rt. Hon. Kevin John (Rother Valley)
Battle, Rt. Hon. John Dominic (Leeds, West)
Bayley, Hugh (City of York)
Beckett, Rt. Hon. Margaret Mary (Derby, South)
Begg, Anne (Aberdeen, South)
Beith, Rt. Hon. Alan James (Berwick-upon-Tweed)
Bell, Sir Stuart (Middlesbrough)
Bellingham, Henry Campbell (North-West Norfolk)
Benn, Rt. Hon. Hilary James (Leeds, Central)
Benton, Joseph Edward (Bootle)
Benyon, Richard Henry Ronald (Newbury)
Bercow, John Simon (Buckingham)
Beresford, Sir Alexander Paul (Mole Valley)
Berry, Roger Leslie (Kingswood)
Betts, Clive James Charles (Sheffield, Attercliffe)
Binley, Brian Arthur Roland (Northampton, South)
Blackman, Elizabeth Marion (Erewash)
Blackman-Woods, Roberta Carol (City of Durham)
Blair, Rt. Hon. Anthony Charles Lynton (Sedgefield)
Blears, Hazel Anne (Salford)
Blizzard, Robert John (Waveney)
Blunkett, Rt. Hon. David (Sheffield, Brightside)
Blunt, Crispin Jeremy Rupert (Reigate)
Bone, Peter William (Wellingborough)
Borrow, David Stanley (South Ribble)
Boswell, Timothy Eric (Daventry)
Bottomley, Peter James (Worthing, West)
Bradshaw, Benjamin Peter James (Exeter)
Brady, Graham Stuart (Altrincham and Sale, West)
Brake, Thomas Anthony (Carshalton and Wallington)
Brazier, Julian William Hendy (Canterbury)
Breed, Colin Edward (South-East Cornwall)
Brennan, Kevin Denis (Cardiff, West)
Brokenshire, James Peter (Hornchurch)
Brooke, Annette Lesley (Mid-Dorset and North Poole)
Brown, Lyn Carol (West Ham)
Brown, Rt. Hon. James Gordon (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath)
Brown, Rt. Hon. Nicholas Hugh (Newcastle upon Tyne, East and Wallsend)
Brown, Russell Leslie (Dumfries and Galloway)
Browne, Desmond Henry (Kilmarnock and Loudon)
Browne, Jeremy Richard (Taunton)
Browning, Angela Frances (Tiverton and Honiton)
Bruce, Malcolm Gray (Gordon)
Bryant, Christopher John (Rhondda)
Buck, Karen Patricia (Regent's Park and Kensington, North)
Burden, Richard Haines (Birmingham, Northfield)
Burgon, Colin (Elmet)
Burnham, Andrew Murray (Leigh)
Burns, Simon Hugh McGuigan (West Chelmsford)
Burrowes, David John Barrington (Enfield, Southgate)
Burstow, Paul Kenneth (Sutton and Cheam)
Burt, Alistair James Hendrie (North-East Bedfordshire)
Burt, Lorely Jane (Solihull)
Butler, Dawn Petula (Brent, South)
Butterfill, Sir John Valentine (Bournemouth, West)
Byers, Rt. Hon. Stephen John (North Tyneside)
Byrne, Liam Dominic (Birmingham, Hodge Hill)

C

Cable, John Vincent (Twickenham)
Caborn, Rt. Hon. Richard George (Sheffield, Central)
Cairns, John David (Inverclyde)
Calton, Patsy (Cheadle)
Cameron, David William Donald (Witney)
Campbell, Alan (Tynemouth)
Campbell, Gregory Lloyd (East Londonderry)
Campbell, Ronald (Blyth Valley)
Campbell, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter Menzies (North-East Fife)
Carmichael, Alexander Morrison (Orkney and Shetland)
Carswell, John Douglas Wilson (Harwich)
Cash, William Nigel Paul (Stone)
Caton, Martin Phillip (Gower)
Cawsey, Ian Arthur (Brigg and Goole)
Challen, Colin Robert (Morley and Rothwell)
Chapman, James Keith (Wirral, South)
Chaytor, David Michael (Bury, North)
Chope, Christopher Robert (Christchurch)
Clapham, Michael (Barnsley, West and Penistone)

Clappison, William James (Hertsmere)
Clark, Gregory David (Tunbridge Wells)
Clark, Katy (North Ayrshire and Arran)
Clark, Paul Gordon (Gillingham)
Clarke, Rt. Hon. Charles Rodway (Norwich, South)
Clarke, Rt. Hon. Kenneth Harry (Rushcliffe)
Clarke, Rt. Hon. Thomas (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill)
Clegg, Nicholas William Peter (Sheffield, Hallam)
Clelland, David Gordon (Tyne Bridge)
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey (Cotswold)
Clwyd, Rt. Hon. Ann (Cynon Valley)
Coaker, Vernon Rodney (Gedling)
Coffey, Ann (Stockport)
Cohen, Harry Michael (Leyton and Wanstead)
Connarty, Michael (Linlithgow and East Falkirk)
Conway, Derek Leslie (Old Bexley and Sidcup)
Cook, Francis (Stockton, North)
Cook, Rt. Hon. Robin (Livingston)
Cooper, Rosemary Elizabeth (West Lancashire)
Cooper, Yvette (Pontefract and Castleford)
Corbyn, Jeremy Bernard (Islington, North)
Cousins, James MacKay (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central)
Cox, Charles Geoffrey (Torridge and West Devon)
Crabb, Stephen (Preseli Pembrokeshire)
Crausby, David Anthony (Bolton, North-East)
Creagh, Mary Helen (Wakefield)
Cruddas, Jonathon (Dagenham)
Cryer, Constance Ann (Keighley)
Cummings, John Scott (Easington)
Cunningham, James Dolan (Coventry, South)
Cunningham, Thomas Anthony (Workington)
Curry, Rt. Hon. David Maurice (Skipton and Ripon)
Curtis-Thomas, Claire (Crosby)

D

Darling, Rt. Hon. Alistair Maclean (Edinburgh, South-West)
Davey, Edward Jonathon (Kingston and Surbiton)
David, Wayne (Caerphilly)
Davidson, Ian Graham (Glasgow, South-West)
Davies, David Thomas Charles (Monmouth)
Davies, John Quentin (Grantham and Stamford)
Davies, Philip Andrew (Shipley)
Davis, Rt. Hon. David Michael (Haltemprice and Howden)
Dean, Janet Elizabeth Ann (Burton)
Denham, Rt. Hon. John Yorke (Southampton, Itchen)
Dhanda, Parmjit Singh (Gloucester)
Dismore, Andrew Hartley (Hendon)
Djanogly, Jonathan Simon (Huntingdon)
Dobbin, James (Heywood and Middleton)
Dobson, Rt. Hon. Frank Gordon (Holborn and St. Pancras)
Dodds, Nigel Alexander (Belfast, North)
Doherty, Pat (West Tyrone)
Donaldson, Jeffrey Mark (Lagan Valley)
Donohoe, Brian Harold (Central Ayrshire)
Doran, Frank (Aberdeen, North)
Dorrell, Rt. Hon. Stephen James (Charnwood)
Dorries, Nadine Vanessa (Mid-Bedfordshire)
Dowd, James Patrick (Lewisham, West)
Drew, David Elliott (Stroud)
Duddridge, James Philip (Rochford and Southend, East)
Duncan, Alan James Carter (Rutland and Melton)
Duncan Smith, Rt. Hon. George Iain (Chingford and Woodford Green)
Dunne, Philip Martin (Ludlow)
Dunwoody, Gwyneth Patricia (Crewe and Nantwich)
Durkan, John Mark (Foyle)

E

Eagle, Angela (Wallasey)
Eagle, Maria (Liverpool, Garston)
Efford, Clive Stanley (Eltham)
Ellman, Louise Joyce (Liverpool, Riverside)
Ellwood, Tobias Martin (Bournemouth, East)
Engel, Natascha (North-East Derbyshire)
Ennis, Jeffrey (Barnsley, East and Mexborough)
Etherington, William (Sunderland, North)
Evans, Nigel Martin (Ribble Valley)
Evennett, David Anthony (Bexleyheath and Crayford)

F

Fabricant, Michael Louis David (Lichfield)
Fallon, Michael Cathel (Sevenoaks)
Farrelly, Christopher Paul (Newcastle-under-Lyme)
Farron, Timothy James (Westmorland and Lonsdale)
Featherstone, Lynne Choona (Hornsey and Wood Green)
Field, Rt. Hon. Frank (Birkenhead)
Field, Mark Christopher (Cities of London and Westminster)
Fisher, Mark (Stoke-on-Trent, Central)
Fitzpatrick, James (Poplar and Canning Town)
Flello, Robert Charles Douglas (Stoke-on-Trent, South)
Flint, Caroline Louise (Don Valley)
Flynn, Paul Phillip (Newport West)
Follett, Daphne Barbara (Stevenage)
Forth, Rt. Hon. Eric (Bromley and Chislehurst)
Foster, Donald Michael Ellison (Bath)
Foster, Michael Jabez (Hastings and Rye)
Foster, Michael John (Worcester)
Fox, Liam (Woodspring)
Francis, David Hywel (Aberavon)
Francois, Mark Gino (Rayleigh)
Fraser, Christopher James (South-West Norfolk)

G

Gale, Roger James (North Thanet)
Galloway, George (Bethnal Green and Bow)
Gapes, Michael John (Ilford, South)
Gardiner, Barry Strachan (Brent, North)
Garnier, Edward Henry (Harborough)
Gauke, David Michael (South-West Hertfordshire)
George, Andrew Henry (St. Ives)
George, Rt. Hon. Bruce Thomas (Walsall, South)
Gerrard, Neil Francis (Walthamstow)
Gibb, Nicolas John (Bognor Regis and Littlehampton)
Gibson, Ian (Norwich, North)
Gidley, Sandra Julia (Romsey)
Gildernew, Michelle (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Gillan, Cheryl Elise Kendall (Chesham and Amersham)
Gilroy, Linda (Plymouth, Sutton)
Godsiff, Roger Duncan (Birmingham, Sparkbrook and Small Heath)
Goggins, Paul Gerard (Wythenshawe and Sale, East)
Goldsworthy, Julia Anne (Falmouth and Camborne)
Goodman, Helen Catherine (Bishop Auckland)
Goodman, Paul Alexander Cyril (Wycombe)
Goodwill, Robert (Scarborough and Whitby)
Gove, Michael Andrew (Surrey Heath)
Gray, James Whiteside (North Wiltshire)
Grayling, Christopher Stephen (Epsom and Ewell)
Green, Damian Howard (Ashford)
Greening, Justine (Putney)
Greenway, John Robert (Ryedale)

Grieve, Dominic Charles Roberts (Beaconsfield)
Griffith, Nia Rhiannon (Llanelli)
Griffiths, Nigel (Edinburgh, South)
Grogan, John Timothy (Selby)
Gummer, Rt. Hon. John Selwyn (Suffolk Coastal)
Gwynne, Andrew John (Denton and Reddish)

H

Hague, Rt. Hon. William Jefferson (Richmond, Yorks)
Hain, Rt. Hon. Peter Gerald (Neath)
Hall, Michael Thomas (Weaver Vale)
Hall, Patrick (Bedford)
Hamilton, David (Midlothian)
Hamilton, Fabian (Leeds, North-East)
Hammond, Philip (Runnymede and Weybridge)
Hammond, Stephen William (Wimbledon)
Hancock, Michael Thomas (Portsmouth, South)
Hands, Gregory William (Hammersmith and Fulham)
Hanson, David George (Delyn)
Harman, Rt. Hon. Harriet (Camberwell and Peckham)
Harper, Mark James (Forest of Dean)
Harris, Evan Leslie (Oxford, West and Abingdon)
Harris, Tom (Glasgow, South)
Harvey, Nicholas Barton (North Devon)
Haselhurst, Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Gordon Barraclough (Saffron Walden)
Havard, David Stewart (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney)
Hayes, John Henry (South Holland and The Deepings)
Heal, Sylvia Lloyd (Halesowen and Rowley Regis)
Heald, Oliver (North-East Hertfordshire)
Healey, John (Wentworth)
Heath, David William St. John (Somerton and Frome)
Heathcoat-Amory, Rt. Hon. David Philip (Wells)
Hemming, John Alexander Melvin (Birmingham, Yardley)
Henderson, Douglas John (Newcastle upon Tyne, North)
Hendrick, Mark Phillip (Preston)
Hendry, Charles (Wealden)
Hepburn, Stephen (Jarrow)
Heppell, John (Nottingham, East)
Herbert, Nicholas Le Quesne (Arundel and South Downs)
Hermon, Sylvia Eileen, Lady (North Down)
Hesford, Stephen (Wirral, West)
Hewitt, Rt. Hon. Patricia Hope (Leicester, West)
Heyes, David Alan (Ashton-under-Lyne)
Hill, Rt. Hon. Keith (Streatham)
Hillier, Meg (Hackney, South and Shoreditch)
Hoban, Mark Gerard (Fareham)
Hodge, Rt. Hon. Margaret Eve (Barking)
Hodgson, Sharon (Gateshead, East and Washington, West)
Hoey, Catharine Letitia (Vauxhall)
Hogg, Rt. Hon. Douglas Martin (Sleaford and North Hykeham)
Hollobone, Philip Thomas (Kettering)
Holloway, Adam James Harold (Gravesham)
Holmes, Paul Robert (Chesterfield)
Hood, James (Lanark and Hamilton, East)
Hoon, Rt. Hon. Geoffrey William (Ashfield)
Hope, Philip Ian (Corby)
Hopkins, Kelvin Peter (Luton, North)
Horam, John Rhodes (Orpington)
Horwood, Martin Charles (Cheltenham)
Hosie, Stewart (Dundee, East)
Howard, Rt. Hon. Michael (Folkestone and Hythe)
Howarth, David Ross (Cambridge)
Howarth, George Edward (Knowsley, North and Sefton, East)
Howarth, James Gerald Douglas (Aldershot)
Howells, Kim Scott (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Lindsay Harvey (Chorley)
Hughes, Rt. Hon. Beverley June (Stretford and Urmston)
Hughes, Simon Henry Ward (North Southwark and Bermondsey)
Huhne, Christopher Murray Paul (Eastleigh)
Humble, Jovanka Joan (Blackpool, North and Fleetwood)
Hunt, Jeremy (South-West Surrey)
Hurd, Nicholas Richard (Ruislip-Northwood)
Hutton, Rt. Hon. John Matthew Patrick (Barrow and Furness)

I

Iddon, Brian (Bolton, South-East)
Illsley, Eric Evlyn (Barnsley, Central)
Ingram, Rt. Hon. Adam (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow)
Irranca-Davies, Ifor Huw (Ogmore)

J

Jack, Rt. Hon. John Michael (Fylde)
Jackson, Glenda May (Hampstead and Highgate)
Jackson, Stewart James (Peterborough)
James, Siân Catherine (Swansea, East)
Jenkin, Bernard Christison (North Essex)
Jenkins, Brian David (Tamworth)
Johnson, Rt. Hon. Alan Arthur (Kingston upon Hull, West and Hessle)
Johnson, Alexander Boris (Henley)
Johnson, Diana Ruth (Kingston upon Hull, North)
Jones, David Ian (Clwyd, West)
Jones, Helen Mary (Warrington, North)
Jones, Kevan David (North Durham)
Jones, Lynne Mary (Birmingham, Selly Oak)
Jones, Martyn David (Clwyd, South)
Jowell, Rt. Hon. Tessa Jane (Dulwich and West Norwood)
Joyce, Eric (Falkirk)

K

Kaufman, Rt. Hon. Sir Gerald Bernard (Manchester, Gorton)
Kawczynski, Daniel Robert (Shrewsbury and Atcham)
Keeble, Sally Curtis (Northampton, North)
Keeley, Barbara Mary (Worsley)
Keen, Alan (Feltham and Heston)
Keen, Ann Lloyd (Brentford and Isleworth)
Keetch, Paul Stuart (Hereford)
Kelly, Rt. Hon. Ruth Maria (Bolton, West)
Kemp, Fraser (Houghton and Washington, East)
Kennedy, Rt. Hon. Charles Peter (Ross, Skye and Lochaber)
Kennedy, Rt. Hon. Jane Elizabeth (Liverpool, Wavertree)
Key, Simon Robert (Salisbury)
Khabra, Piara Singh (Ealing, Southall)
Khan, Sadiq Aman (Tooting)
Kidney, David Neil (Stafford)
Kilfoyle, Peter (Liverpool, Walton)
Kirkbride, Julie (Bromsgrove)
Knight, Rt. Hon. Gregory (East Yorkshire)
Knight, Jim (South Dorset)
Kramer, Susan Veronica (Richmond Park)
Kumar, Ashok (Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland)

L

Ladyman, Stephen John (South Thanet)
Laing, Eleanor Fulton (Epping Forest)
Lait, Jacqueline Anne Harkness (Beckenham)
Lamb, Norman Peter (North Norfolk)
Lammy, David Lindon (Tottenham)
Lancaster, John Mark (North-East Milton Keynes)
Lansley, Andrew David (South Cambridgeshire)
Law, Peter John (Blaenau Gwent)
Laws, David Anthony (Yeovil)
Laxton, Robert (Derby, North)
Lazarowicz, Marek Jerzy (Edinburgh, North and Leith)
Leech, John (Manchester, Withington)
Leigh, Edward Julian Egerton (Gainsborough)
Lepper, David (Brighton, Pavilion)
Letwin, Rt. Hon. Oliver (West Dorset)
Levitt, Tom (High Peak)
Lewis, Ivan (Bury, South)
Lewis, Julian Murray (New Forest, East)
Liddell-Grainger, Ian Richard (Bridgwater)
Lidington, David Roy (Aylesbury)
Lilley, Rt. Hon. Peter Bruce (Hitchin and Harpenden)
Linton, Martin (Battersea)
Lloyd, Anthony Joseph (Manchester, Central)
Llwyd, Elfyn (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy)
Lord, Sir Michael Nicholson (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich)
Loughton, Timothy Paul (East Worthing and Shoreham)
Love, Andrew Mcculloch (Edmonton)
Lucas, Ian Colin (Wrexham)
Luff, Peter James (Mid-Worcestershire)

M

McAvoy, Rt. Hon. Thomas McLaughlin (Rutherglen and Hamilton, West)
McCabe, Stephen James (Birmingham, Hall Green)
McCafferty, Christine (Calder Valley)
McCarthy, Kerry (Bristol, East)
McCarthy-Fry, Sarah Louise (Portsmouth, North)
McCartney, Rt. Hon. Ian (Makerfield)
McCrea, The Reverend Robert Thomas William (South Antrim)
McDonagh, Siobhain Ann (Mitcham and Morden)
McDonnell, Alasdair (Belfast, South)
McDonnell, John Martin (Hayes and Harlington)
MacDougall, John William (Glenrothes)
McFadden, Patrick Bosco (Wolverhampton, South-East)
McFall, Rt. Hon. John (West Dunbartonshire)
McGovern, James (Dundee, West)
McGrady, Eddie (South Down)
McGuinness, Martin (Mid-Ulster)
McGuire, Anne (Stirling)
McIntosh, Anne Caroline Ballingall (Vale of York)
McIsaac, Shona (Cleethorpes)
Mackay, Rt. Hon. Andrew James (Bracknell)
McKechin, Ann (Glasgow, North)
McKenna, Rosemary (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch, East)
Mackinlay, Andrew (Thurrock)
Maclean, Rt. Hon. David John (Penrith and The Border)
McLoughlin, Patrick Allen (West Derbyshire)
MacNeil, Angus Brendan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar)
McNulty, Anthony James (Harrow, East)
MacShane, Denis (Rotherham)
Mactaggart, Fiona Margaret (Slough)
Mahmood, Khalid (Birmingham, Perry Barr)
Main, Anne Margaret (St. Albans)
Malik, Shahid (Dewsbury)
Malins, Humfrey Jonathan (Woking)
Mallaber, Judy (Amber Valley)
Mann, John (Bassetlaw)
Maples, John Cradock (Stratford-on-Avon)
Marris, Robert Howard (Wolverhampton, South-West)
Marsden, Gordon (Blackpool, South)
Marshall, David (Glasgow, East)
Marshall-Andrews, Robert Graham (Medway)
Martin, Rt. Hon. Michael John (Glasgow, North-East)
Martlew, Eric Anthony (Carlisle)
Mates, Rt. Hon. Michael John (East Hampshire)
Maude, Rt. Hon. Francis Anthony Aylmer (Horsham)
May, Rt. Hon. Theresa Mary (Maidenhead)
Meacher, Rt. Hon. Michael Hugh (Oldham, West and Royton)
Meale, Joseph Alan (Mansfield)
Mercer, Patrick John (Newark)
Merron, Gillian Joanna (Lincoln)
Michael, Rt. Hon. Alun Edward (Cardiff, South and Penarth)
Milburn, Rt. Hon. Alan (Darlington)
Miliband, David Wright (South Shields)
Miliband, Edward Samuel (Doncaster, North)
Miller, Andrew Peter (Ellesmere Port and Neston)
Miller, Maria Frances Lewis (Basingstoke)
Milton, Anne Frances (Guildford)
Mitchell, Andrew John Bower (Sutton Coldfield)
Mitchell, Austin Vernon (Great Grimsby)
Moffatt, Laura Jean (Crawley)
Mole, Christopher David (Ipswich)
Moon, Madeleine (Bridgend)
Moore, Michael Kevin (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk)
Moran, Margaret (Luton, South)
Morden, Jessica Elizabeth (Newport, East)
Morgan, Julie (Cardiff, North)
Morley, Elliot Anthony (Scunthorpe)
Moss, Malcolm Douglas (North-East Cambridgeshire)
Mountford, Kali Carol Jean (Colne Valley)
Mudie, George Edward (Leeds, East)
Mulholland, Gregory Thomas (Leeds, North-West)
Mullin, Christopher John (Sunderland, South)
Mundell, David Gordon (Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale)
Munn, Margaret Patricia (Sheffield, Heeley)
Murphy, Conor Terence (Newry and Armagh)
Murphy, Denis (Wansbeck)
Murphy, Jim (East Renfrewshire)
Murphy, Rt. Hon. Paul Peter (Torfaen)
Murrison, Andrew William (Westbury)

N

Naysmith, John Douglas (Bristol, North-West)
Newmark, Brooks (Braintree)
Norris, Dan (Wansdyke)

O

O'Brien, Michael (North Warwickshire)
O'Brien, Stephen Rothwell (Eddisbury)
O'Hara, Edward (Knowsley, South)
Oaten, Mark (Winchester)
Olner, William John (Nuneaton)
Öpik, Lembit (Montgomeryshire)

Osborne, George Gideon Oliver (Tatton)
Osborne, Sandra (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock)
Ottaway, Richard Geoffrey James (Croydon, South)
Owen, Albert (Ynys Môn)

P

Paice, James Edward Thornton (South-East Cambridgeshire)
Paisley, The Reverend Ian Richard Kyle (North Antrim)
Palmer, Nicholas Douglas (Broxtowe)
Paterson, Owen William (North Shropshire)
Pearson, Ian Phares (Dudley, South)
Pelling, Andrew John (Croydon, Central)
Penning, Michael Alan (Hemel Hempstead)
Penrose, John David (Weston-Super-Mare)
Picking, Anne (East Lothian)
Pickles, Eric Jack (Brentwood and Ongar)
Plaskitt, James Andrew (Warwick and Leamington)
Pope, Gregory James (Hyndburn)
Pound, Stephen Pelham (Ealing, North)
Prentice, Bridget Theresa (Lewisham, East)
Prentice, Gordon (Pendle)
Prescott, Rt. Hon. John Leslie (Kingston upon Hull, East)
Price, Adam (Carmarthen, East and Dinefwr)
Primarolo, Rt. Hon. Dawn (Bristol, South)
Prisk, Mark (Hertford and Stortford)
Pritchard, Mark Andrew (The Wrekin)
Prosser, Gwynfor Mathews (Dover)
Pugh, John David (Southport)
Purchase, Kenneth (Wolverhampton, North-East)
Purnell, James Mark Dakin (Stalybridge and Hyde)

R

Rammell, William Ernest (Harlow)
Randall, Alexander John (Uxbridge)
Raynsford, Rt. Hon. Wyvill Richard Nicolls (Greenwich and Woolwich)
Redwood, Rt. Hon. John Alan (Wokingham)
Reed, Andrew John (Loughborough)
Reed, Jamieson Ronald (Copeland)
Reid, Alan (Argyll and Bute)
Reid, Rt. Hon. John (Airdrie and Shotts)
Rifkind, Rt. Hon. Sir Malcolm Leslie (Kensington and Chelsea)
Riordan, Linda (Halifax)
Robathan, Andrew Robert George (Blaby)
Robertson, Angus (Moray)
Robertson, Hugh Michael (Faversham and Mid Kent)
Robertson, John (Glasgow, North-West)
Robertson, Laurence Anthony (Tewkesbury)
Robinson, Geoffrey (Coventry, North-West)
Robinson, Iris (Strangford)
Robinson, Peter David (Belfast, East)
Rogerson, Daniel John (North Cornwall)
Rooney, Terrence Henry (Bradford, North)
Rosindell, Andrew Richard (Romford)
Rowen, Paul John (Rochdale)
Roy, Frank (Motherwell and Wishaw)
Ruane, Christopher Shaun (Vale of Clwyd)
Ruddock, Joan Mary (Lewisham, Deptford)
Ruffley, David Laurie (Bury St. Edmunds)
Russell, Christine Margaret (City of Chester)
Russell, Robert Edward (Colchester)
Ryan, Joan Marie (Enfield, North)

S

Salmond, Alex Elliot Anderson (Banff and Buchan)
Salter, Martin John (Reading, West)
Sanders, Adrian Mark (Torbay)
Sarwar, Mohammad (Glasgow, Central)
Scott, Lee (Ilford, North)
Seabeck, Alison Jane (Plymouth, Devonport)
Selous, Andrew Edmund Armstrong (South-West Bedfordshire)
Shapps, Grant V (Welwyn Hatfield)
Shaw, Jonathan Rowland (Chatham and Aylesford)
Sheerman, Barry John (Huddersfield)
Shepherd, Richard Charles Scrimgeour (Aldridge-Brownhills)
Sheridan, James (Paisley and Renfrewshire, North)
Short, Rt. Hon. Clare (Birmingham, Ladywood)
Simmonds, Mark Jonathan Mortlock (Boston and Skegness)
Simon, Siôn Llewelyn (Birmingham, Erdington)
Simpson, Alan John (Nottingham, South)
Simpson, David (Upper Bann)
Simpson, Keith Robert (Mid-Norfolk)
Singh, Marsha (Bradford, West)
Skinner, Dennis Edward (Bolsover)
Slaughter, Andrew Francis (Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush)
Smith, Rt. Hon. Andrew David (Oxford, East)
Smith, Angela Christine (Sheffield, Hillsborough)
Smith, Angela Evans (Basildon)
Smith, Geraldine (Morecambe and Lunesdale)
Smith, Rt. Hon. Jacqueline Jill (Redditch)
Smith, John William Patrick (Vale of Glamorgan)
Smith, Sir Robert (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine)
Snelgrove, Anne Christine (South Swindon)
Soames, Arthur Nicholas Winston (Mid-Sussex)
Soulsby, Sir Peter Alfred (Leicester, South)
Southworth, Helen Mary (Warrington, South)
Spellar, Rt. Hon. John Francis (Warley)
Spelman, Caroline Alice (Meriden)
Spicer, Sir Michael William Hardy (West Worcestershire)
Spink, Robert Michael (Castle Point)
Spring, Richard John Grenville (West Suffolk)
Squire, Rachel Anne (Dunfermline and West Fife)
Stanley, Rt. Hon. Sir John Paul (Tonbridge and Malling)
Starkey, Phyllis Margaret (Milton Keynes, South-West)
Steen, Anthony David (Totnes)
Stewart, Ian (Eccles)
Stoate, Howard Geoffrey Alvan (Dartford)
Strang, Rt. Hon. Gavin Steel (Edinburgh, East)
Straw, Rt. Hon. John Whitaker (Blackburn)
Streeter, Gary Nicholas (South-West Devon)
Stringer, Graham Eric (Manchester, Blackley)
Stuart, Gisela Gschaider (Birmingham, Edgbaston)
Stuart, Graham Charles (Beverley and Holderness)
Stunell, Andrew (Hazel Grove)
Sutcliffe, Gerald (Bradford, South)
Swayne, Desmond Angus (New Forest, West)
Swinson, Jo (East Dunbartonshire)
Swire, Hugo (East Devon)
Syms, Robert Andrew Raymond (Poole)

T

Tami, Mark Richard (Alyn and Deeside)
Tapsell, Sir Peter Hannay Bailey (Louth and Horncastle)
Taylor, Dari Jean (Stockton, South)
Taylor, David Leslie (North-West Leicestershire)
Taylor, Ian Colin (Esher and Walton)

Taylor, Matthew Owen John (Truro and St. Austell)
Taylor, Richard Thomas (Wyre Forest)
Teather, Sarah Louise (Brent, East)
Thomas, Gareth Richard (Harrow, West)
Thornberry, Emily (Islington, South and Finsbury)
Thurso, Viscount John Archibald (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross)
Timms, Stephen Creswell (East Ham)
Tipping, Simon Patrick (Sherwood)
Todd, Mark Wainwright (South Derbyshire)
Touhig, James Donnelly (Islwyn)
Tredinnick, David Arthur Stephen (Bosworth)
Trickett, Jon Hedley (Hemsworth)
Truswell, Paul Anthony (Pudsey)
Turner, Andrew John (Isle of Wight)
Turner, Desmond Stanley (Brighton, Kemptown)
Turner, Neil (Wigan)
Twigg, John Derek (Halton)
Tyrie, Andrew Guy (Chichester)

U

Ussher, Kitty (Burnley)

V

Vaizey, Edward Henry Butler (Wantage)
Vara, Shailesh Lakhman (North-West Cambridgeshire)
Vaz, Keith (Leicester, East)
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BANQUETING FLOOR MANAGER—Rui Duarte

BANQUETING SUPERVISOR—Vacancy

Catering Services - Outbuildings—

OPERATIONS MANAGER—Della Herd

SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGERS - OUTBUILDINGS—Andrew Buckmaster

MANAGERS - PORTCULLIS HOUSE—Denise Durkin

MANAGER - 1 PARLIAMENT STREET (BELLAMY'S)—Tammy Holmes

MANAGER - 7 MILLBANK—James Ellis

Finance and Accounts Office—

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER—Morounke Akingbola

Finance Manager—Caroline Attenborough
Accounts Office Staff—Connie Bichri, Alison Cutts, Hannah Scott, Jan Gundersen
Cashier—Kate Lapidge
Purchasing Manager—Sara McKinnon-Snell
Head Storekeeper—Mark Wildash

OTHER PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Clerk of the Crown in Chancery—Alex Allan
Comptroller and Auditor General—Sir John Bourn, KCB
Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration—Ann Abraham

17 May 2005

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 18 May 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

"Making a difference: taking forward our priorities"

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Harriet Harman): On 11 May I published "Making a difference: taking forward our priorities". Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

It is also available on the Department for Constitutional Affairs website at http://www.dca.gov.uk/dept/priorities2005.htm

DEFENCE

Defence Bills Agency (Key Targets)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Adam Ingram): Key targets have been set for the chief executive of the Defence Bills Agency (DBA) for the financial year 2005–06. The targets, which build on the already high standards of service provided by the agency since its formation in 1996, are as follows:

1. To pay 99.9 per cent. of correctly presented bills within 11 calendar days of receipt as part of the Department's 30-day payment target.

2. To raise 99 per cent. of invoices accurately within four days of receipt of a valid order initiation.

3. To ensure that the average percentage of overdue collectable debt due to the Department does not exceed 26 per cent. of total collectable debt.

4. To deliver 99 per cent. of the required accounting and financial information feed to the departmental financial management system portal within one working day.

5. To make a progressive improvement of at least 1 per cent. in the overall level of customer satisfaction over a baseline of 80 per cent. achieved in 2004–05.

6. To make a progressive reduction in the unit costs for bills of at least 3 per cent. by March 2006, over the 2004–05 baseline.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Rural Payments Agency

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I have set the Rural Payments Agency the following performance targets for 2005–06.

Customers

To commence payments under the single payment (SPS by February 2006 and to process and pay 96 per cent. of valid SPS claims by value by 31 March 2006.

To process and pay at least 90 per cent. of valid claims by volume under Pillar 1 schemes other than SPS/IACS within ministerial guidelines and 99 per cent. within the set EU Commission deadlines or in their absence 60 days.

To process and pay valid claims with at least 98.5 per cent. accuracy.

To record 98 per cent. of valid and complete notifications of births, deaths and movements of cattle on CTS within 14 days of their receipt.

To re-baseline customer satisfaction to take account of the new customer base under SPS and to build on that with improvements in future years.

To implement the SPS communications strategy and achieve success criteria engaging with customers via roadshows and publications.

Finance

To ensure that disallowance within the control of RPA due to non-compliance with EU requirements remains below 2 per cent. of the value of CAP payments made by the agency.

To operate within 3 per cent. of the forecast for total expenditure (DEL and AME combined) supplied at the time of the Defra third quarter review.

Business Processes

To issue SPS claim forms to all known potential claimants and enter the data received back on to the database.

To complete the agreed inspection programme for CAP schemes in accordance with EU regulatory requirements, taking into account any approved derogations.

To provide accurate and timely operational advice in support of policy development and Defra business systems.

People

To implement a managed transition to the new organisational design whilst maintaining business continuity and ensuring that RPA retains sufficient people with appropriate skills to be able to process claims under SPS.

To ensure that relevant staff receive adequate training to process SPS claims effectively by delivering a planned training programme.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Youth Justice Agency of Northern Ireland

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. David Hanson): I have placed copies of the Youth Justice Agency's corporate plan for 2005–08 and business plan for 2005–06 in the Libraries of both Houses.

The business plan contains 10 key performance targets I have set for the service for 2005–06. These are:

1. All young people sentenced or remanded to the Juvenile Justice Centre for more than one week will have an educational assessment and individual learning plan.

2. Some 90 per cent. of all young people sentenced to custody will commence an approved scheme of tackling offending programme during the custodial element of their sentence.

3. Achieve 80 per cent. completion in all community orders supervised by the agency.

4. No escapes from within the Juvenile Justice Centre.

5. Over the year no more than 2 per cent. of the total new referral/admissions to the agency should be non-accidentally injured.

6. Over the year no more than 2 per cent. of the total members of staff should be non-accidentally injured while engaged in the work of the agency.

7. No members of the public should be non-accidentally injured while accessing agency services.

8. Deliver at least 75 per cent. of the planned training days specified in the corporate training priorities plan for 2005–06.

9. Agency expenditure is within approved budgetary limits.

10. Achieve a victim participation rate of at least 50 per cent. at youth conferences.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 19 May 2005

TREASURY

Finance Bill

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): It is expected that the Finance Bill will be published on Thursday 26 May. Explanatory notes on the Bill's clauses will be available in the Vote Office (and the Printed Paper Office, House of Lords) and the Libraries of both Houses on that day. Members of the public will be able to obtain copies of the explanatory notes from the Stationery Office's bookshops. These will also be available on the Treasury's website http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

DEFENCE

United Kingdom Hydrographic Office

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): Key targets have been set for the chief executive of the UK Hydrographic Office for the financial year 2005–06. The targets are designed to drive further improvements to the agency's performance and are as follows:

Key Target 1. Safety

While aiming for 100, to achieve a safety index exceeding 95. All radio navigational warnings issued to timescale.

Key Target 2. Defence

To achieve ~~an index~~ rating of 95 or more for the defence programme as set out in the tasking authorisation forms.

Key Target 3. Customer Satisfaction

Customer and end user satisfaction to exceed a scale rating of 87 by the end of financial year 2005–06.

Key Target 4. Wider Markets

To earn revenue of £3.6 million from markets other than SOLAS (UN Safety of Life at Sea) navigational products and services.

Key Target 5. Finance

To break even taking one year with another and to achieve a return on capital employed of 9 per cent. in the financial year 2005–06.

Key Target 6. Efficiency

Mark-up to be reduced to 210 per cent. by end 2005–06.

Notes

Key Target 1:

This is a composite target (theoretical maximum 100) measuring the timeliness of the turnaround of safety critical data, the quality of the data handling processes and the safety risk associated with the worldwide chart series.

Key Target 2:

The Defence Customer uses Tasking Authorisation Forms to define the products and services it requires; this target (theoretical maximum 100) relates to the UKHO's performance against these requirements.

Key Target 3:

The satisfaction of customers and end users is surveyed on a quarterly basis; this target is based on the question of how satisfied, on a scale of 0–100, are they with the UKHO as a supplier.

Service Children's Education

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): The chief executive of service children's education has been set the following key targets for 2005–06.

Key Target 1

Sustain threshold level performance at each of the key stages 1, 2 and 3 by matching national (England) achievement in all subject elements and exceeding it by 3 per cent. in a majority of the 12 subject elements.

Sustain the percentage of pupils obtaining A*-C at GCSE as a three-year rolling average.

Sustain the percentage of students obtaining A-E at "A" Level as a three-year rolling average.

Key Target 2

Sustain SCE's notional position in the English local education authority league tables, within the leading 25 (of 150) LEAs at each of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Key Target 3

At the higher levels of attainment (i.e. level 3+ at Key Stage 1, level 5+ at Key Stage 2, level 6+ at Key Stage 3) match national level of performance in 7 of the 12 subject elements in 2005, rising to 8 in 2006.

Key Target 4

For GCSE, sustain performance in average points scores by achieving a score within 10 points of the England "capped" upper quartile figure.

Key Target 5

To achieve Grade 4 or above (on the OfSTED seven point scale) in at least 85 per cent. of schools inspected, in each of the following areas:

Overall effectiveness of the school
Overall standards achieved
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities
The quality of education provided by the school
The leadership and management of the school

Key Target 6

To achieve an overall parental customer satisfaction rating of at least 85 per cent. in the 2004–05 parental survey.

HEALTH

Food Products (Para Red)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Caroline Flint): I have been advised by the Food Standards Agency that on 5 May the agency issued advice to consumers not to eat foods that had inadvertently been contaminated with an illegal dye, para red. This advice follows previous action taken by the Food Standards Agency to ensure the withdrawal of a range of products containing chilli powder since July 2003 which had been contaminated with a different illegal dye, sudan I.

Para red, like sudan I, could contribute to an increased risk of cancer. At the levels found the risk is likely to be very small however it is sensible to avoid eating any more foods contaminated with this substance.

In addition to the list of affected products published on 5 May, further updates were published on 6 and 11 May bringing the total number to 69. The agency acted with all possible speed to inform consumers which products were affected so retailers and consumers could act on this advice. All of the products have now been withdrawn.

Food companies have a legal obligation to remove from sale products that do not meet food safety requirements and to inform the Food Standards Agency and local authorities, and advise consumers about withdrawal.

The contamination of spices with illegal dyes is a European-wide issue. The Food Standards Agency has therefore been pressing for a harmonised approach to this problem to be adopted throughout the European Union. A meeting of the EU Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health was held on 10 May in Brussels to specifically discuss the issue of illegal dyes. A number of initiatives were agreed. These include a review by the European Food Safety Authority of the toxicological data available on para red and other similar dyes, and the establishment of a working group to develop testing methods for these substances and make these available to all Member States. The United Kingdom will co-ordinate this working group. The European Commission made clear at the meeting that the presence of these dyes in food is not acceptable at any level.

The Food Standards Agency has also announced that it is setting up a task force on incidents. The aim of this task force is to consider ways of strengthening controls in the food chain in order to reduce the likelihood of future contamination incidents occurring and to identify the most effective ways of managing such incidents if they occur. The task force will report to the board of the Food Standards Agency.

The Food Standards Agency also plans to set up a separate, independent, review of the circumstances and actions surrounding the sudan I incident itself. This will not take place however until investigations by local authorities of some of the key players involved, which are currently underway, have been completed and any resulting prosecutions concluded, so as not to prejudice the outcomes. This may delay the start of the review for up to 18 months.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Detained Terrorist Suspects

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Shaun Woodward): I have today arranged for copies of Dr. Bill Norris's annual report for 2004 to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

I welcome Dr Norris's report and will consider it carefully. I will respond as soon as possible.

SCOTLAND

Legislative Programme

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Alistair Darling): I have placed in the Libraries of the House a note summarising the likely application to Scotland of the Bills announced on 17 May.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 23 May 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Legislative Programme

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Harriet Harman): The Department for Constitutional Affairs will be taking forward proposals and legislation on reform of the House of Lords, electoral administration, criminal defence services, the coroner system, reform of legal services, and compensation in the forthcoming session.

We have today introduced, in the other place, the Criminal Defence Bill. This Bill contributes to bringing criminal legal aid expenditure under better control, by allowing for means testing to ensure those who can pay for their criminal defence do so, however providing that they will normally be reimbursed where acquitted.

This Session, we will introduce, in draft, a Bill for the better regulation of the legal profession and those who provide legal services.

We will introduce a Compensation Bill to clarify that there should be claims only where there is blame, and by regulating claims farmers to ensure they uphold high standards.

The Electoral Administration Bill will establish new measures to increase security. It will also introduce measures to make elections more accessible to all members of our society and give new powers to returning officers enabling them to deliver elections and electoral services more efficiently and effectively.

The Government will bring forward measures to reform the House of Lords including: a Committee of both Houses to identify and set out the key conventions of the House of Lords; a reasonable time limit for Bills to proceed through the second chamber; removal of the remaining hereditary peers; and a free vote on the composition of the House.

Criminal Defence Service Bill: Framework Document

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice): My Department will issue a written statement tomorrow.

HEALTH

Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): The 2003–04 annual report for the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health [HC 7], was laid before Parliament today. Copies are available in the Library.

Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): The 2002–03 annual report for the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health, [HC 6], was laid before Parliament today. Copies are available in the Library.

TRANSPORT

Crossrail: Environmental Statement

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): The Department for Transport invited comments on the Environmental Statement for Crossrail when it was published in February. That comment period closed on 17 May, and we have received a substantial number of submissions. Given that we do not expect Second Reading of the Bill to take place until after the Whitsun recess, we have decided to extend the period for comment by three weeks, to 10 June, to give people a further opportunity to offer views on the ES.

Comments on the ES should be sent to Tim Neate, Consultation Manager, Major Projects Division 3, Zone 2/08, 76 Marsham Street, London, SWIP 4DR (e-mail: crossrail@dft.gsi.gov.uk). All comments received will be presented to the House and published.

A copy of the ES and non-technical summary (together with supporting specialist reports) are available on the Department for Transport's website at www.dft.gov.uk and on Cross London Rail Links' (CLRL) website at http://billdocuments.crossrail.co.uk/.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 24 May 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Criminal Defence Service Bill: Framework Document

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice): I have today published the "Criminal Defence Service Bill: Framework Document" which accompanies the Criminal Defence Service Bill, introduced in the House of Lords yesterday. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. It is also available on the Department for Constitutional Affairs website.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

EU Emissions Trading Scheme

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): On 11 March, we announced that we intended to issue allowances as soon as possible to allow operators to participate in the EU emissions trading scheme. I am pleased to say that the allowances have been published today. Emissions trading will start in the UK with the UK registry becoming operational, allowing operators participating in the scheme to access their allowances later this week.

Emissions trading are a key component of UK and wider European action to tackle climate change. The Government are committed to using the UK's G8 and EU presidencies this year to combat the growing problem of man-made climate change. The scheme is set to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions by around 65 million tonnes carbon dioxide (around 8 per cent.) below projected emissions of the installations covered by the scheme over the next three years. It gives industry a clear incentive to reduce carbon emissions, while enabling it to do so at least cost.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Fifth Report: Independent Monitoring Commission

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): I have received the fifth report of the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC). This report has been made under articles 4 and 7 of the international agreement that established the Commission and it reports on levels of paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland. I have considered the content of the report and I am today bringing it before Parliament. I have placed copies in the Library of the House.

The report concludes that paramilitary groups continue to be active in violent and other crime and none has materially wound down its capability to commit violent or other crime. Dissident republican groups are the most committed to continuing terrorism. A downward trend in paramilitary violence has continued. Loyalist groups remain responsible for more violence than republican ones. Exiling continues and there are indications that a considerable proportion of the prisoners released under the terms of the Belfast agreement have re-engaged in paramilitary activities or have become involved in organised crime, or both.

The report recommends that the review of the licensing regime for the security industry should take account of the need to ensure it bears down to the maximum extent possible on paramilitary involvement, in conjunction with other control regimes and other aspects of law enforcement. A review of security licensing arrangements in Northern Ireland is underway and IMC's views will be fully taken into account as part of those deliberations.

The IMC report also recommends that I should continue the financial measures against the Progressive Unionist Party in the Northern Ireland Assembly. I shall now consider carefully the Commission's recommendations and will make a further statement in due course.

I am grateful to the Commission for its submission of this report and for its careful analysis.

PRIME MINISTER

Ministerial Cabinet Committees

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I have today placed a copy of the current list of Cabinet Committees with their full membership and terms of reference in the Libraries of both Houses. Details have also been updated on the Cabinet Office website.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 25 May 2005

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Lottery Transformational Grants Programme

The Minister for Sport and Tourism (Mr. Richard Caborn): I am pleased to inform the House that on 24 May I formally issued the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) and the Community Fund—now operating jointly under the name of the Big Lottery Fund—with policy directions in connection with the transformational grants programme. We announced our intention to establish such a programme in the National Lottery funding decision document in July 2003.

NOF and the Community Fund applied to the Secretary of State in December 2004 to authorise the two funds to participate in a joint scheme to make transformational grants. The New Opportunities Fund (Specification of Initiative) Order 2005, which came into force on 5 April 2005, following a resolution of each Houses of Parliament, specified transformational grants as a new NOF initiative

The policy directions which I have issued to the Big Lottery Fund were subject to public consultation and will allow the fund to carry forward the best of the Millennium Commission's work. This presents an opportunity for the fund occasionally to support exciting major capital projects. These will benefit community regeneration and contribute to growth and transformation across the UK.

I have placed a copy of the policy directions and my letter to Sir Clive Booth in the Libraries of both Houses.

DEFENCE

The Duke of York's Royal Military School

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): The Chief Executive of the Duke of York's Royal Military School has been set the following key targets for 2005–06.

1. To achieve an average GCSE capped points score per 15-year-old pupil of 61.
2. To achieve 92 per cent. of 15 year old pupils gaining five or more passes graded A* to C at GCSE.
3. To achieve an average GCE points score per candidate of 314.02.
4. To achieve an average GCE points score per examination entry of 63.39.
4. To generate income from the hire of school facilities of at least £14,000 and support at least eight community events.
5. To achieve Investors in People re-accreditation in 2005–06.

Defence Analytical Services Agency

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): Key targets have been set for the chief executive of the Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA) for the financial year 2005–06. The targets, which build on the already high standards of service provided by the agency since its formation in 1992, are as follows:

> Meet at least 95 per cent. of the timeliness and quality targets in the 53 service level agreements with customers and project agreements for surveys, modelling and other one-off projects.
>
> Publish the five key national statistics on time, with no major errors and with no breaches of the pre-release arrangements, and meet 95 per cent. of the timeliness and quality targets for other defence national statistics publications.
>
> Deliver five key new products/services.
>
> At least 90 per cent. of customers report satisfaction with the overall service they receive from DASA, as reported in the annual customer satisfaction survey.
>
> Make sufficient efficiency gains to provide the necessary resources to enable DASA to deliver key target 3.

Defence Communication Services Agency

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): Key targets have been set for the chief executive of the Defence Communication Services Agency for financial year 2005–06 as follows:

DCSA Key Targets for FY 2005–06

Title	*Details*	*Target*
KT 1—SERVICE ASSURANCE	The single agency measure of performance against Customer Supplier Agreements (CSAs).	To meet an average of 98% for measured services against the performance targets agreed in Agency CSAs.
KT 2—SERVICE AVAILABILITY	The measurement of the availability of operational services to customers.	To achieve an average service availability of 98% for operational and business critical services.
KT 3—SERVICE RESTORATION	The measurement of the Agency's service restoration performance	To restore an average 98% of interrupted services within negotiated timelines agreed to in CSAs.
KT 4—EFFICIENCY MEASUREMENT	The measurement of the reduction in the average unit cost of output.	To achieve an improvement in efficiency by reducing the average unit cost of output by 7% over 2004/05 costs.
KT 5—PROJECT DELIVERY	The measurement of the Agency's effectiveness in introducing major complex projects.	More than 91% of new projects will meet their time, cost and performance targets.

Infantry Regimental Headquarters Review

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): On 16 December 2004 my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Defence, announced arrangements for the future Army structure (FAS). A significant part of this work regarded the future infantry structure (FIS).

As we work to implement FIS, it is appropriate that we examine whether the supporting infrastructure of regimental headquarters (RHQs) is correctly configured.

We need to ensure that the design of the RHQs will support the future infantry. As before, they will give support to our soldiers whilst making the most effective use of taxpayers' money. RHQs will also continue to fulfil their remit of supporting former members of the Army.

The infantry RHQ review has therefore been commissioned to undertake this work. It will ultimately recommend the most effective and efficient method of delivering the functions of an RHQ in order to support the future infantry. This work is due to report by the end of the year and a final recommendation is not therefore expected until 2006. The review will not include RHQ Royal Irish.

The review will not look into museums. However, where museums are co-located with RHQs, the implications for the museums will have to be determined and weighed in consideration of options.

Iraq: Roulement

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): As part of the routine management of UK forces in the Multinational Division (South-East) (MND(SE)) in Iraq, we are conducting a roulement offerees. The lead UK formation, previously 4 Armoured Brigade, will now be provided by 12 Mechanised Brigade. The majority of forces involved in this roulement will complete their deployment by 30 May. The following units are involved:

Currently Deployed in Iraq (TELIC 5)	*After Roulement (TELIC 6)*
4 Armoured Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron	12 Mechanised Brigade Headquarters and Signals Squadron
1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards	The King's Royal Hussars
The Royal Dragoon Guards	The Light Dragoons
4th Regiment the Royal Artillery	19th Regiment the Royal Artillery
1st Battalion Scots Guards	1st Battalion Coldstream Guards
1st Battalion Welsh Guards	1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment
1st Battalion the Duke of Wellington's Regiment	1st Battalion the Royal Regiment Wales
21 Engineer Regiment	1st Battalion The Staffordshire Regiment
	26 Engineer Regiment
7 Transport Regiment Royal Logistic Corps	3 Close Support Regiment Royal Logistic Corps
The East & West Riding Regiment/ Tyne Tees Regiment TA	The East of England Regiment TA/ The Royal Rifle Volunteers TA
2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment	1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment

At the end of this process the number of troops in Iraq will be around 8,500—a little over 400 more than at present. The reason for this small increase is in order to allow greater effort to be put into the training, development and mentoring of the Iraqi security forces: this will enable them to take on ever greater responsibility for their own security and so pave the way for UK troops to withdraw.

We will continue to consider, with the Iraqi Transitional Government and our partners in the multinational force, the levels and dispositions of forces required in Iraq. If we judge that further changes to the UK military contribution would be appropriate, we will of course inform the House at the earliest opportunity.

Service Medical and Dental Officers

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): The supplement to the 2005 report of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body making recommendations on the pay of service medical and dental officers has been published today. Copies of the supplement are available in the Vote Office and the Library of the House.

The review body's final recommendations are to be accepted in full, with implementation effective from 1 April 2005.

The review body recommends an increase of 3.225 per cent. for all regular and reserve defence medical services medical and dental officers. The review body also recommends a pay increase of 3.225 per cent. for medical and dental cadets. In addition, the review body recommends that there should be an increase of 3.225 per cent. in the values of trainer pay and distinction awards. The review body has also endorsed the introduction of the defence medical clinical excellence award scheme to mirror arrangements already in place in the NHS.

The cost of these recommendations to the defence budget will be some £4.6 million. This will be met within existing departmental expenditure limits.

Tornado Future Support Strategy

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): On 1 November 2004, I informed the House that there would be a series of announcements relating to the defence logistics transformation programme. On 25 November, I set out, in broad terms, the future arrangements for military aircraft support.

As a further development of these arrangements, I am today announcing our plans for the support of the RAF's fleet of Tornado aircraft. It is our intention to reduce the complexity of the Tornado support arrangements by placing, incrementally, where it offers best value-for-money for defence, contracts with BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce Defence Aerospace, leading to the eventual placement of a single support contract with each company to provide improved platform and engine availability.

This approach has the potential to improve significantly the availability and capability of our front-line aircraft. As the next stage in this process, we are now entering into a period of detailed discussions with the companies concerned to agree acceptable arrangements to deliver these benefits.

Formal and informal consultation with the trades unions will continue as the implementation of this strategy is taken forward.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Bellwin Scheme (Carlisle, Cumbria, Cumbria Police, Allerdale, Copeland, Eden and South Lakeland Councils)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Jim Fitzpatrick): Carlisle and large areas of Cumbria experienced exceptional storm and flood damage between 7 and 12 January 2005. Given these circumstances, I am satisfied that financial assistance under the Bellwin scheme is justified. A scheme will therefore be established under section 155 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Grants will be paid to the authorities to cover 85 per cent. of the eligible costs above a threshold, which they have incurred in dealing with the storm and flood damage.

Home Ownership

The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. John Prescott): I have today, with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, published a document setting out the Government's proposals for extending home ownership.

Copies of the document have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Nepal

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): When the King of Nepal dismissed the multi-party government and assumed direct power on 1 February this year, the UK expressed grave concern, saying that these moves would increase the risk of instability in Nepal and undermine the institutions of democracy and constitutional monarchy in the country. We also said we would be assessing the impact of the move on our security and developmental assistance.

Three months on we remain concerned about the continued detention of a number of political and civil society activists and ongoing restrictions on the press. We acknowledge the King lifting the state of emergency and releasing a number of political leaders from detention. We welcome agreement to the establishment of an Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights office in Nepal. We also welcome the publication by the political parties of a joint position on 8 May. We hope the King will respond to these efforts by engaging in a renewed dialogue with them. However, there is still a long way for the King to go in restoring representative government and democratic freedoms. This includes releasing the remaining political prisoners detained since 1 February, the easing of restrictions on the media and efforts to reintegrate the parties back into the political process. The Royal Nepalese Army also has a long way to go in improving its human rights record, tackling the culture of impunity and cooperating with human rights organisations. Our objective remains to see the restoration of basic civil and political freedoms. We will continue to cooperate with our key international partners in working towards this objective and will be monitoring the situation on the ground with close attention.

I said on 22 February in a statement that we would review the impact of the King's actions. Against the background of recent developments, we are continuing to keep our security assistance to Nepal under review but now intend to provide a package of bomb disposal equipment, which we had previously planned to gift. The Ministry of Defence is today laying before the House a parliamentary minute which gives the details of the proposed package.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Windfarm (Scout Moor)

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): I have decided to grant consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to Scout Moor Wind Farm Ltd. to build 26 turbines with a capacity of 65 MW, at Scout Moor, near Rochdale.

My decision was taken after extensive and thorough consideration of the representations I received, both for and against consent being granted. The extensive, independent public inquiry ensured that community and environmental concerns were heard.

I am aware that this decision will come as a disappointment to those local people who opposed the application. Conversely, the decision will be welcomed by those local people who supported the application. Today's approval takes into account the concerns raised, and includes a number of conditions recommended by the inquiry inspector to mitigate any impacts.

This wind farm will generate clean, renewable electricity and make a vital contribution towards reducing carbon emissions and meeting the UK's international obligations on tackling climate change.

Copies of the decision letter and consent together with copies of the inspector's report are being placed in the Library of the House.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Employment and Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): The Employment and Social Policy, Health and Consumer's Affairs Council will be held on 2 and 3 June in Luxembourg. Employment and social policy issues will be taken on 2 June. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and my hon. Friend the Minister for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs will represent the UK. Health issues will be taken on 3 June.

The agenda items are as follows:

Integrated guidelines for growth and employment (2005–08). Proposal for a Council decision on guidelines on member states' employment policies.

> The annual employment guidelines are a key element of the European employment strategy. The guidelines set out the framework of common priorities for member states' employment policies and are agreed by the Council of Ministers before coming into force. The annual economic and employment guidelines have been integrated for 2005. The 2005 employment guidelines reflect the conclusions of the Luxembourg Spring Council (22 and 23 March 2005) by being more focused on growth and jobs. This is tabled for a general approach (a high level agreement on broad principles). The UK supports the Commission's approach in producing shorter guidelines.

Proposed directive implementing a social partners agreement on working time for cross border rail crew.

> This is tabled for political agreement to agree the measure before reaching formal adoption of common position. The UK welcomes social partner dialogue and supports, in principle, a directive on a social partner agreement on this subject. The proposed directive is intended to implement a social partners' agreement concluded on 27 January 2004

between the European Transport Workers' Federation and the Community of European Railways—respectively the social partners representing unions and employers in the rail sector—on certain aspects of the working conditions of mobile workers assigned to interoperable cross-border rail services. However, the UK has concerns about the potential negative impact of this particular agreement on the prospects for growth in the European rail sector and feels that the European institutions need to take seriously their undertakings on better regulation.

Proposal for a Council regulation amending regulation (EC) No 2062/94 establishing a European agency for safety and health at work (Bilbao).

Proposal for a Council regulation amending regulation (EEC) No 1365/75 on the creation of a European foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions (Dublin).

The Bilbao agency collates and distributes information on health and safety whilst the Dublin foundation undertakes monitoring as well as research and development projects. These two items are both tabled for political agreement. The proposed regulations seek to improve governance and structures following enlargement. The UK supports both regulations.

Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending directive 2003/88/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time.

EU negotiations on the revision of the working time directive have been ongoing since September 2004. There will be a public debate on this item. The UK is seeking EU agreement to legislative proposals to retain individual workers' freedom to choose to work more than 48 hours a week and provide a solution to the issues of on-call working.

Green Paper on an EU approach to managing economic migration.

The Commission Green Paper was published on 7 January 2005, launched a consultation on the potential added value of a community framework on admission of economic migrants, and on the form that such a framework might take. This is tabled for an exchange of views. The Government have submitted their response to this Green Paper and have provided the response to both scrutiny committees.

Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European institute for gender equality.

The creation of an institute for gender equality was supported by the Council of Ministers in June 2004. The institute will provide the relevant institutions and authorities of the Community and its member states with objective, reliable and comparative information on gender equality and data at national and European levels and to give visibility to gender equality. This is tabled for general approach. The UK supports the principle of a European institute for gender equality, as it would raise the profile of gender equality across Europe and provide a more coherent approach to gathering research and information at EU level. However, it should be budget neutral, add value and avoid duplication.

Review of the implementation by the member states and the EU institutions of the Beijing platform for action.

The Beijing platform for action is the UN's agenda for women's empowerment launched in Beijing in 1995. It aims at accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and at removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making.

The objective of this agenda item is to agree the review of the Beijing platform for action proposed by the Presidency in the Council conclusions paper. These Council conclusions recognise that gender equality is a fundamental principle of the EU and is one of the objectives and tasks of the Community and that mainstreaming equality between women and men in all its activities represents a specific mission for the Community. The conclusions are based on the common declaration adopted by EU gender equality Ministers in Luxembourg in February 2004 on future European strategies. The UK fully supports the Council conclusions.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 26 May 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Regulatory Impact Assessment

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. John Hutton): The Government are committed to ensuring that regulations are necessary, give effective protection, balance cost and risk, are fair and command public confidence.

In accordance with this, we require Departments to produce and publish RIAs for all regulatory proposals likely to have an impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies.

I have today presented to Parliament a Command Paper [Cm 6552] listing RIAs published between 1 July and 31 December 2004. Copies of those listed have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. This is the 22nd such Command Paper.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Electoral Administration Policy Paper

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Harriet Harman): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer of Thoroton, has made the following written ministerial statement in the other place today, 26 May 2005.

> "On 25 May my Department published a policy paper on electoral administration which seeks views on a number of issues relating to the way elections are run. My hon. Friend, the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs, Ms Harriet Harman has also written to all hon. Members enclosing a copy of the paper and inviting them to respond as part of the consultation process. Copies of the paper have also been placed in the Libraries of both Houses
>
> The paper seeks views on our proposals for changes to the administrative arrangements for elections, in particular on those which relate to postal voting and registration. We intend to implement these measures in time for the local elections due next May, so to meet the legislative timetable the time for responses is short. But we are keen to engage all stakeholders in the process so that effective and workable solutions are developed".

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Digital Screen Network

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (James Purnell): I am pleased to inform the House that the UK Film Council has today announced the 209 cinemas that will be part of its £11.7 million lottery funded digital screen network.

This digital screen network is a world first that puts the UK at the forefront of digital cinema technology. In return for digital projection equipment, cinemas have committed to the showing of more specialised, non-mainstream, films. The result will be an additional 75,000 specialised film screenings in the first full year of the initiative, rising to 165,000 in year four. The digital screen network will ensure that people right across the UK, and not just those in the major cities, will be able to access a broader range of films.

This initiative is in addition to the UK Film Council funding of £2 million a year to support the distribution of specialised films and the £1 million already spent to ensure that more cinemas are able to show films in formats accessible to cinemagoers with sensory disabilities.

TREASURY

Tax Credit Over-payments

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): Today over 6 million families and 10 million children are benefiting from tax credits. The tax credits introduced in April 2003 are more generous and more inclusive than any previous system of income-based financial support.

The introduction of a system of tax credits has been a huge undertaking. For the vast majority of families the new system is working well, providing important advantages over previous systems of support. In particular, the new system is more responsive than previous "snapshot" systems: it allows awards to be adjusted in-year when a family's income or other circumstances change.

I am determined that the tax credit system will do the job it was designed for—to deliver to all families the financial support they are entitled to, providing the right amount of support at the right time. However, at the point when the new tax credits were introduced, problems arose affecting a small proportion of families. Many Members have raised specific cases with me and there has been much discussion and debate in the House, most recently in the Westminster Hall debate that I was unfortunately unable to attend due to illness. I am, therefore, taking this opportunity to provide the House with an update on the steps that HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is taking to address these problems.

It is now well known that in the early months of 2003–04 the Inland Revenue encountered serious problems with the new IT system, resulting in over-payments and other difficulties. Some families have also found the information provided to them on the status of their awards unclear, which has made the process more difficult.

In response to these challenges I have agreed with David Varney, the chairman of HMRC, that HMRC will take a series of important steps to improve the administration of tax credits. The Department has been working hard with its new IT contractor to improve the performance of the tax credits IT system. The accuracy with which tax credits information is processed is improving. Officials have been working closely with representative bodies, for example, to improve the clarity of the information provided to families on their tax credit awards. Further, new streamlined procedures have been introduced to decide cases where the recovery of an over-payment is disputed.

These are all important steps forward but there remain key challenges for the Department in delivering tax credits. I am therefore setting out six measures to improve significantly the tax credits system, with particular regard to how the Department communicates with families about their tax credit award; reducing the risk of errors adding to the number of over-payments; improving procedures for recovering over-payments.

1. Building on the work already undertaken to improve the clarity of the tax credit award notice and in consultation with the voluntary sector, HMRC will review the effectiveness of information provided to claimants, to support them in understanding the responsive nature of the tax credit system and the risk of over-payments. In particular the Department will develop solutions to reduce the number of cases where people receive unnecessary duplication of award notices.

2. HMRC will test out new methods of reminding tax credit claimants of the importance of providing up to date information in year on changes in their income and circumstances. The Department will consider options to identify families most at risk of an over-payment and support them through better targeted contacts to ensure their stated circumstances and income are up to date.

3. HMRC will develop options to improve the quality of service on the helpline, in particular to ensure that helpline operators can track the progress of individual cases in the system, reducing the need for families to contact the helpline on multiple occasions.

4. HMRC will improve the speed with which it identifies IT system problems and processing errors so that they can be resolved more quickly.

5. Tax credits are working well for millions of families but the system is new and requires active engagement from claimants. The role of the voluntary sector in providing advice to families receiving tax credits is crucial. I have asked HMRC to develop innovative ways of working with the sector to target more active support on vulnerable families.

6. HMRC will review the operation of the code of practice on over-payments. Meeting the commitment made by HMRC's chairman to the Public Accounts Committee in January 2005, the Department will ensure that in cases of genuine hardship where the recovery of an over-payment is disputed, recovery can be suspended while the dispute is resolved.

ECOFIN: European Economic Reform

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): Europe must adapt to the changing balance of global economic activity and the rise of fast-growing emerging economies. Only a globally-orientated Europe—focused on macro-economic stability, marrying flexibility and fairness in employment markets, championing enterprise and innovation, and open to trade—can forge a new route to social justice in a global age.

Among the reform initiatives we wish to move forward to help equip Europe to meet the global economic challenge:

Competitiveness and Regulation

Reaching agreement among all 25 member states to the six presidencies initiative, putting regulatory reform at the heart of ECOFIN's work programme.

A risk-based approach to EU regulation that cuts down on administrative burdens.

All regulatory proposals to be tested for their impact on competitiveness.

Setting up an independent business-led advisory group to give business a central role in the EU rule-making and simplification process.

The European Lamfalussy Committees on banking, securities and insurance to report annually to ECOFIN, starting during the UK presidency, on proposals to reduce burdens on business.

Jobs

Member States to publish Lisbon National Reform Programmes explaining how they will each implement further structural reform, including reform of their labour markets.

Competition, State Aid & Innovation

Delivering full energy market liberalisation by 2007.

A new framework for an ambitious, in-depth approach to market investigations and a clear timetable for identifying priority sectors for investigation.

The UK will chair a conference in London in July to reinforce commitments to reduce distortive state aids.

Progress on a more cost-effective European intellectual property regime.

International co-operation

An EU-India financial markets regulatory dialogue, parallel to the EU-China dialogue.

USA-EU co-operation

Calling on the EU-US summit in June to set out an ambitious new economic partnership including creating a barrier free transatlantic financial market.

And because I believe this aim of European economic reform is one around which we can build a national consensus and one that all parties will want to support, I have written to my hon. Friend the Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman), to ask whether his Committee on Europe can take the lead in this work. I urge all parties to participate.

DEFENCE

Pay and Personnel Agency

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): Extensive discussions aimed at setting clear key targets for the pay and personnel agency have been concluded. My objective was to focus on customer service and satisfaction, process and efficiency.

I have, therefore, agreed with the chief executive of the PPA the following key targets:

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SATISFACTION

Key Target 1:

Achieve 99.0 per cent. average timeliness and 97.3 per cent. average accuracy for salary payments, expenses payments and pension awards.

Key Target 2:

Achieve 93 per cent. average responsiveness against key service standards.

Key Target 3:

Improve customer satisfaction index score from 72.6 per cent. in 2002–03 and 78.5 per cent. in 2004–05 to 80 per cent. in 2006–07. [Note: not measured in 2005–06; measured in alternate years.]

PROCESSES

Key Target 4:

Implement programme for future pay system, achieving systems integration testing by January 2006, and user acceptance and PPA business readiness by March 2006.

Key Target 5:

Migrate Agency into future People, Pay and Pensions Agency, supporting agreed package of early services by April 2005; interim recruiting service by September 2005; and PPA systems and processes ready to migrate by March 2006.

EFFICIENCY

Key Target 6:

Reduce unit costs in real terms by: salary payments 10 per cent.; expenses payments 25 per cent.; pension awards 10 per cent.

Mine Counter Measures Vessels

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): Members would wish to be aware of changes to the base ports of the Royal Navy's mine counter measures squadrons.

Following on from announcements made in the July 2004 Defence White Paper, the Royal Navy has considered how best to reorganise mine counter measures squadrons to deliver the operational capabilities required in the future. Due to: the variations in the types of sonar on the two classes; the requirement for some Hunts, which can be used for fishery protection duties, to be co-located with the fishery protection squadron in Portsmouth; and because we wish to cause the minimum amount of disruption to individuals, it has been decided that the best long term option will be provided by the formation of two single class squadrons.

This means that, in the future, all eight Hunt class vessels will be based in Portsmouth while all eight Sandown class vessels will be based in Scotland (Faslane). The changes required to achieve this will be complete by March 2007.

Some 150 or so personnel are involved. For them and their families this change provides an opportunity to introduced long-term stability. No personnel will be made redundant as a result of the changes in basing arrangements.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

National Spatial Address Infrastructure

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Phil Woolas): The Government are today announcing plans for a new national, high-quality spatial address infrastructure building on the work already undertaken by Ordnance Survey and local government. The aim is to provide a single national database that will be maintained through a partnership approach and a collaborative framework of address and property identifiers. This will be developed and operated by Ordnance Survey in partnership with local and central government. The joint prospectus launched today is available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website describes the proposal in more detail. The Government seek comments from interested parties by the end of June.

The database, currently to be known as the national spatial address infrastructure (NSAI), will support a wide range of services delivered by central and local government and the private sector.

The infrastructure will build on local land and property gazetteers (LLPGs), the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG), the National Street Gazetteer, the postcode address file (PAF) and Ordnance Survey AddressPoint. NSAI will draw on the expertise of stakeholders including local authorities, Royal Mail Group plc, Office for National Statistics and Valuation Office Agency.

The main partners, Ordnance Survey and Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), have agreed heads of terms for the development process. A first cut of the NSAI will become available eight months after the full agreement is signed, paving the way towards a final structure after 18 months. The NSAI will initially relate to England and Wales. Longer term, the plan is to include information from Scotland and Northern Ireland to create a UK-wide infrastructure.

Stakeholders will have a continuing input to the process via a governance process that will encourage participation at a number of different levels. This group will be chaired by a senior official at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. £2.3 million is also being made available by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister from the local e-government programme to Surrey county council acting as lead authority for local government to enable the transfer of the NLPG database to the NSAI and to help facilitate local government's transition from one system to the other.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Government Response to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee Report

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): The Government have today published their response to the EFRA Committee report, "The Government's Rural Strategy and the draft Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill", published on 26 March 2005.

The Government's response includes detailed replies to the Committee's recommendations following its pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Bill.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill was introduced to the House of Commons on 19 May 2005. Second Reading is provisionally scheduled to take place on Monday, 6 June 2005.

A copy of the EFRA Committee report is available on the House of Commons website. The Government's response and further information on the Bill are available at: www.defra.gov.uk/rural/ruraldelivery.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Entry Clearance (Report)

The Minister for the Middle East (Dr. Kim Howells): Lord Triesman, The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, today arranged for copies of the second annual report by Fiona Lindsley, the independent monitor for entry clearance refusals without the right of appeal, to be placed in the Library of the House. Decisions taken in the calendar year 2003 were the subject of this review. I join Lord Triesman in welcoming Ms Lindsley's report and thanking her for her work.

HEALTH

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): The next meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council will be on 2–3 June. I will attend for the United Kingdom. Items on the agenda relating to health will be covered on 3 June. Items for discussion are: European Commission proposals for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on medicinal products for paediatric use; and the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on nutrition and health claims made on foods; the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the addition of vitamins, minerals and other substances to food; the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a programme of community action in health and consumer protection; obesity, nutrition and physical activity; combatting HIV/AIDS; and mental health.

Health Ministers will have an orientation debate on paediatric medicines. The UK can support the Commission's proposal for the articles under discussion.

There will be a public debate on the objectives of the European Commission's proposed programme of action in the field of health and consumer protection. The Presidency will ask the member states whether they support the health objectives in the proposal. The UK can support the general direction of the objectives.

Ministers will be asked to adopt draft council conclusions on obesity, nutrition and physical activity, calling on member states to develop initiatives aimed at promoting health diets and physical activity.

The Presidency will present draft council conclusions on HIV/AIDS, inviting member states to take further action in fighting HIV/AIDS.

Ministers will also be asked to adopt draft council conclusions on mental health, inviting member states to implement comprehensive mental health systems that cover promotion and prevention as well as treatment and care.

The UK can support the three sets of draft conclusions as drafted.

Under any other business, the Presidency and the Commission will provide information on the international health regulations and on the framework convention for tobacco control. The European Commission will provide information on the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, environment and health and the work of the Commission-led high level group on health care in the European Union. There will also be a progress report on the proposed directive modifying directive 95/2/CE on food additives and directive 94/35/CE on colourings used in food.

Ministers will also discuss preparation for an influenza pandemic and the health response to the tsunami in South Asia.

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Jane Kennedy): The 2005–06 business plan for the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has today been presented to Parliament. The plan contains the agency's key targets for the year.

Copies of the plan have been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Worker Registration Scheme: Accession Monitoring Report

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): Today I am publishing the third "Accession Monitoring Report" showing provisional management information from the worker registration scheme and data from Government monitoring of benefits, housing and national insurance number applications for the period 1 May 2004 to 31 March 2005. The report is available electronically on the Home Office website at: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/0/reports/accession_monitoring.html.

Also today, as part of the Government's commitment to monitor the impact of workers from eight of the new EU Member States on the UK labour market, the Department for Work and Pensions is publishing early evidence of the "Impact of the Free Movement of Workers from Central and Eastern Europe on the UK labour market". The report is available at: www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/wp18.pdf.

The evidence confirms earlier indications that the Government's decision to allow individuals from the new member states to work in the UK has been largely beneficial to the UK economy. We estimate that workers from the new EU member states contributed approximately £500 million to UK GDP between May 2004 and March 2005. New EU citizens continue to register employment throughout the UK, easing employer recruitment difficulties and helping to address labour shortages in key sectors. The number of people from the new member states seeking benefits remains exceptionally low. There appears to have been a significant reduction in illegal working amongst accession nationals, and an increase in employment and output in the sectors in which these workers are located, with minimal impact on resident workers.

In total 176,000 workers from the new member states applied to the worker registration scheme between 1 May and 31 March 2005, of who up to a third (59,000) were already in the UK before 1 May 2004. The level of applications has fallen since the peak in June and July 2004. Many workers only remain for short periods of time. A recent survey commissioned by the recruitment firm manpower found that of employers who had taken on workers from the new member states half had workers who had subsequently left their employment.

On average, workers who had left were employed for between three and four months. In future the e-borders programme will allow us to monitor people leaving and entering the UK.

The accession monitoring report shows that workers from the new members states are continuing to find jobs in sectors where there are a high number of vacancies. For example, 8 per cent. of workers registered in the manufacturing sector, which according to the latest ONS vacancy survey had over 628,900 vacancies in the quarter ending April 2005. Significantly, there is evidence from the most recent labour force survey that demand for labour is still outstripping supply in certain sectors, despite the fact that high percentages of new EU nationals are registered as working in these industries.

Since enlargement of the European Union on 1 May 2004, macroeconomic conditions in the UK remain robust and the UK labour market continues to perform well. Individuals from the new member states make up just over 0.4 per cent. of the total working age population, and there is little evidence of widespread impacts on employment, unemployment or wages. UK employment currently stands at 74.9 per cent., unchanged from 12 months ago. In March 2005 the average earnings index, excluding bonuses, was up 4.6 per cent. on the year, unchanged from May 2004.

The early evidence from the "Impact of the Free Movement of Workers" study suggests that overall the effect of EU enlargement on the UK labour market has been broadly positive, reflecting the flexibility and speed of adjustment of the UK labour market. The employment rate of individuals from the eight new member states has increased substantially—from under 60 per cent. in 2003 to over 75 per cent. by the end of 2004—while employment has continued to rise to record levels for both the domestic population and other foreign born nationals. In particular, employment has grown significantly in the agriculture and fishing sector. There is some early, mixed evidence that wage inflation in this sector has been lower than in the rest of the economy; further analysis will be necessary to confirm this finding. There are some early suggestions from the analysis that employment of workers from the new member states has led to small localised increases in the claimant unemployment count. However these are preliminary findings, of small magnitude and are expected to be a short term effect. Further analysis will be undertaken to test these findings the effects will continue to be monitored closely over the coming months.

All the evidence from the accession monitoring report continues to reinforce earlier suggestions that individuals from the new member states are coming to the UK for the opportunity to work, not to claim benefits. Over 98 per cent. of applications for national insurance numbers made by individuals from the new member states between 1 May 2004 and 31 March 2005 were for employment purposes. Very few are receiving out of work support or housing and homelessness assistance. For example, between May 2004 and March 2005 there were 1,191 applications for income support, jobseeker's allowance and state pension credit, and of these fewer than 40 were allowed to go forward for further consideration. Over the same period there have been just 43 local authority lettings to tenants from the eight new member states and only 216 people were accepted for assistance under the homelessness legislation. The vast majority of recipients (70 per cent. and 80 per cent. respectively) were in the UK before 1 May 2004. Registered workers continue to be young (82 per cent. were aged 18 to 34) and only 2 per cent. of registered workers had dependants under the age of 17 living with them in the UK. This profile reinforces earlier evidence that the usage of hospital and education services by accession nationals is low.

The next set of figures, incorporating the second quarter of 2005 (April-June 2005) will be published in August.

Race Equality Scheme

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): I have today placed in the Library copies of "Overarching Race Equality Scheme" for the Home Office and the associate schemes for the Core (non-Immigration and Nationality Directorate) Home Office, the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, the National Probation Directorate, the Prison Service, the UK Passport, the Forensic Science Service and the Criminal Records Bureau.

Terrorism Act 2000

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): I am pleased to say that Lord Carlile of Berriew QC has completed the report on the operation of the Act, which will be laid before the House today.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AU Monitoring Mission

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): At a donor conference in Addis Ababa for the African Union's monitoring mission in Darfur today, the UK announced that it was pledging a further £6.6 million worth of support to the mission. This is in addition to the £14 million of support made available to date. It is planned that the money be used to buy 4x4 vehicles, rapid deployment equipment including ration packs and shelters, and to support civilian policing.

At the conference the African Union announced that talks about a political settlement in Darfur would resume in Abuja, Nigeria on 10 June. The Foreign Secretary and I welcome this. The UK will be represented at the talks.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Fraud Law Reform

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. David Hanson): During 2004, on the basis of proposals for the reform of fraud law in England and

Wales, my predecessor my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley (Mr. Spellar), commissioned a public consultation exercise on similar reforms in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland legislation on fraud generally mirrors the legislation in England and Wales and Government took the view that there would be considerable benefit in maintaining a consistent approach across both jurisdictions. The consultations in both jurisdictions produced broadly similar responses.

Today, I am pleased to announce the publication of the Government's response to consultation in Northern Ireland on the reform of the law on fraud. I am also pleased to announce my decision that the draft Fraud Bill, as introduced yesterday in the House of Lords, will extend to Northern Ireland.

The Government's proposals reflect the widespread public support for the proposed draft legislation across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is vital that police and prosecutors have a modern legislative framework to deal with fraud which will make the prosecution process simpler and more efficient for both juries and defendants. The reforms proposed in the draft Bill will make the law more relevant and effective in tackling the wide range of fraudulent activity.

I have placed copies of the Government's response to the public consultation in Northern Ireland in the Library of the House.

TRANSPORT

Rail Passengers Council

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): The Future of Rail White Paper (Command Paper 6233) published in July 2004, announced the intention to reform the Rail Passengers Council. As part of that process, I had recently appointed the current chairman of the RPC, Stewart Francis, as chairman of the new RPC for the remainder of his current term of office. This was due to be announced shortly alongside other new RPC board appointments.

Unfortunately, because of ill health, Stewart Francis has resigned from his position as Chair of the new RPC. I understand and support his decision. I am therefore writing today to Stewart Francis accepting his resignation from both his current appointment as chairman of the RPC and his recent appointment as chairman of the new RPC. Stewart has been the key architect of the organisation's reform and his contribution over the last year in particular has been vital. His involvement in the RPC network and advocacy on behalf of rail passengers over the last eight years must also be commended. I wish him well for the future.

I am still expecting the new RPC to come into existence in July and I shall keep the House informed of further developments as we continue to implement the proposals set out in the White Paper.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 6 June 2005

HEALTH

Research Ethics Committees

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Jane Kennedy): On 16 November 2004, *Official Report*, House of Lords, column WS60, my noble Friend the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Lord Warner, announced that he had asked Michael O'Higgins, a managing partner of PA Consulting Group Ltd., to chair a small ad-hoc group of scientists and lay members examining the operation of the research ethics committee system, including the Central Office for National Health Service Research Ethics Committees. The report is published today and its findings and recommendations will now be subject to consultation through the National Patient Safety Agency.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Rotherham General Hospital NHS Trust

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Liam Byrne): My noble Friend the Minister of State, Lord Warner, has made the following written ministerial statement today.

> "The chairman of Monitor (the statutory name of which is the Independent Regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts) announced on 31 May 2005 that, in accordance with section six of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003, Monitor authorised Rotherham General Hospital NHS Trust as an NHS Foundation Trust from 1 June 2005.
>
> A copy of Monitor's press notice has been placed in the Library.
>
> Monitor's announcement brings the total number of NHS Foundation Trusts to 32".

HOME DEPARTMENT

Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2005

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): I am pleased to report that this year's recipients of the Queen's Awards for Voluntary Service were announced on Thursday 2 June.

This prestigious annual award for groups of volunteers has been given this year to 92 groups whose outstanding voluntary activity has enhanced and improved the quality of life and opportunity for others in the community. The Government actively support the work of the voluntary and community sector and are encouraging more people to participate in community activity. This award will give some of those people the recognition they richly deserve. The details of the successful groups are as follows.

		Activity Description
	East Midlands	
1	Incest and Sexual Abuse Survivors	provision of counselling and support for adults in Nottinghamshire abused as children
2	Talking with Hands	enabling children and adults with hearing difficulties to visit the cinema to watch signed and subtitled films
3	Grantham and District Talking Newspaper for the Blind	providing weekly news items for the visually impaired in Grantham
4	Readycall	helping the elderly in South Derbyshire to maintain independence in their own homes
5	Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Advocacy Alliance	promoting the needs and rights of vulnerable people in Nottinghamshire to enhance their quality of life
	East of England	
6	SOS Home Safe and Sound Project	providing a weekend community bus in Norwich city centre to reduce crime and the fear of crime
7	Luton United Football Club	providing recreational opportunities for young people in Luton with access to football coaching qualifications
8	Yarls Wood Befrienders	providing friendship and support to refugees and asylum seekers detained in Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre
9	North Lynn Community Centre	providing a community resource to benefit people living in North Lynn
10	Magpas	operating an emergency rapid response medical charity in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire
11	St Clare Hospice	caring for people and their families who are affected by life-threatening illnesses
12	FIND	providing friendship and basic essentials to families in Ipswich and surrounding areas to alleviate their serious social problems
13	Basildon Pathfinders Blind and Partially Sighted Group	supporting visually impaired people in Basildon through social interaction, holidays and information
14	Dacorum Talking Newspaper	providing visually impaired people in Hertfordshire with access to community information
15	Furniture Link (Bedford)	recycling furniture and household goods to those in need in Bedfordshire
	Guernsey	
16	Channel Islands Air Search	providing a rapid response airborne search facility in the waters surrounding the Channel Islands

		Activity Description
17	The Guernsey Women's Refuge	offering accommodation to women and children in Guernsey seeking respite from physical or domestic abuse
	Jersey	
18	Community Bereavement Service	providing a free and confidential bereavement counselling service to people in Jersey
	Isle of Man	
19	Riding for the Disabled Association, Isle of Man	providing riding and carriage driving opportunities for people in the Isle of Man who have physical learning difficulties
	London	
20	Muslim Welfare House	providing ethnically diverse communities in Islington with educational, social and recreational support
21	Islington Chinese Association	providing a multi-cultural resource centre for Chinese people as well as serving the wider local and national community
22	Waltham Forest Asian Seniors' Club	providing a centre to support the welfare of older Asian people in the community
23	Sai School of Harrow	nurturing children from multi-faith communities in north London through education, social projects and citizenship
24	Ebony Steel Band Trust	encouraging young people to appreciate their cultural history through arts and music
25	Youth Retreat Project	empowering and training disadvantaged young people in north London through workshops and presentations
26	The Holly Lodge Centre Volunteers	providing opportunities for people of all abilities and ages to enjoy and learn about the natural environment and history of Richmond Park
27	Eritrean Muslim Community Association	advising on education and welfare together with the provision of recreational and social activities for diverse communities in London
	North East	
28	Escape Family Support Ltd	providing drug and alcohol misusers and their families with support in Northumberland
29	Waterhouses Community Association	improving community needs and the environment in Waterhouses through social, educational and recreational activities
30	Ferguson Lane Community Association	providing companionship and support for vulnerable residents in disadvantaged areas in Newcastle
31	St Benedict's Hospice Volunteers in Sunderland	providing practical support to patients, families and carers to complement palliative care in St Benedict's Hospice
	North West	
32	Barnabus	supporting the needs of homeless people and street sex workers in Manchester with food, education and medical facilities
33	SAMM (Merseyside)	providing emotional support to families and friends in Merseyside bereaved by murder or manslaughter
34	Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team	operating a mountain search and rescue service in the rural areas of Lancashire
35	Brunshaw Action Group	addressing the needs of communities in Burnley to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour through community cohesion
36	Talbot House Support Centre	giving practical advice, guidance and support to parents of children with special needs in Manchester
37	West View Community Association	enhancing the quality of life for the community in West View through provision of social and educational facilities
38	Pakistani Community Centre (Longsight)	providing multi-functional social, domestic and leisure services to diverse communities in Longsight.
39	Carlisle and District Remap	design of one-off equipment for disabled people for whom there is no commercially available alternative
40	The Aintree Volunteer Scheme	assisting with patient experience of hospital attendance in Aintree NHS hospitals
	Northern Ireland	
41	BCM Volunteers	helping those most in need in the local community through practical and emotional support
42	Aghalee Village Hall Management Committee	management of a resource centre for residents from all areas of the community in Aghalee
	Scotland	
43	Skye Old People's Welfare Committee	providing transport for elderly people in Skye attending appointments and recreational activities
44	Islay and Jura Advice Centre	providing a free and confidential independent advice service to residents and groups in Islay and Jura
45	Ullapool and District Junior Pipe Band and Highland Dancers	developing skills, talent and self-esteem of young people in Ullapool and district and the provision of a community activity
46	Ragamuffin's Children's Theatre	bringing children and adults together in Torry and Aberdeen through community theatre events and activities
47	Caldercruix Youth and Community Development Project	providing a programme of activities and opportunities for children and young people in Airdrie to increase educational and employment potential

		Activity Description
48	Beith Playpark Action Group	providing a recreational facility for children and young people in Beith and raising funds for further development
49	BCD Credit-Union	providing a range of financial and insurance services to residents in Bridgeton, Calton and Dalmarnock
50	The Muirfeld Group of Riding for the Disabled	offering riding therapy to disabled people in and around East Lothian
51	Dedridge Good Neighbour Network	providing Livingston New Town with a sense of common identity and support through advice and social activities
52	Killin Mountain Rescue Team	locating climbers and walkers in difficulties in the Killin mountainous area
53	The Gladiator Programme	delivering physical activities through play and sports programmes in schools and communities in Greater Easterhouse and across Glasgow
54	The Esk Valley Trust	encouraging public awareness of the Esk Valley through the creation of community paths
	South East	
55	Volunteer Centre—West Berkshire	providing a volunteer recruitment resource centre and a community transport scheme
56	The Lakes Estate Summer Group	serving the needs of Bletchley through social and educational family activities
57	The Source	providing a centre for young people in Aldershot for mentoring and social activities, reducing anti-social behaviour
58	The Heart of Kent Hospice	supporting patients, families and staff in the hospice through physical, emotional, social and spiritual care
59	Surrey Appropriate Adult Volunteer Scheme	looking after the welfare of juveniles and vulnerable adults in Surrey while in police custody
60	The Sussex Snowdrop Trust	supporting families of children in West Sussex diagnosed with life-threatening or terminal illnesses
61	CIS'ters	supporting women in the UK who have been victims of childhood incest and raising awareness of the situation
62	East Surrey Domestic Violence Forum	helping to reduce domestic violence and assisting victims in East Surrey by providing protection, support and advice
63	Wallingford Coach for the Disabled (Elizabeth)	provision of community transport in Wallingford and district for people with impaired mobility
64	Mayfield and Five Ashes Community Cars	providing community transport for residents in Mayfield and Five Ashes attending health related appointments
65	Lighthouse Education Project	meeting the needs of young people in the traveller community in Watersedge through an alternative learning environment
66	TALK	supporting people in Surrey with dysphasia difficulties through therapy and communication partnerships
67	Christian Care Association	providing homeless and marginalised people in Chichester and Bognor area of West Sussex with shelter, support and advice
68	Kent and Medway Walking Bus Group	supporting parents, groups and schools in Kent and Medway by the operation of walking buses
69	Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group	supporting detainees at Gatwick Airport through friendship information and discrimination awareness
	South West	
70	Support Against Racist Incidents Charity	supporting victims of racial harassment in Bristol through advice, training and raising community awareness
71	Hartcliffe and Withywood Teenage Parents Project	providing practical, emotional and mentoring support for teenage parents in Bristol and raising awareness through education
72	Ford Park Cemetery Trust	restoring, managing and preserving the architectural and historical heritage of Ford Park Cemetery
73	West Somerset Disability Association	providing support, social and educational opportunities for people with physical difficulties living in West Somerset
74	Newquay Rowing Club	providing recreational rowing and a social focal point for adults and young people in Newquay alongside local fundraising
75	Codford Youth Group Network	providing a meeting place for young people in Codford with recreational and sporting facilities
76	Gloucestershire Cloud 9	organising holiday of a lifetime visits for children in Gloucestershire who have physical or chronic illnesses
77	Camborne Community Centre	managing a community resource in Camborne to provide social educational and recreational facilities for local residents
	Wales	
78	Rhyl Gateway Club	providing a meeting place for social, recreational and educational facilities for those with learning difficulties in Rhyl and district
79	Eastern Valley Tenants Panel	advising and supporting tenants in Eastern Valley to encourage community involvement
80	Swansea Chinese Community Co-op Centre	promoting the well-being of the Chinese community in the Swansea area

		Activity Description
81	Moelfre Community Project	involving older people in the Moelfre community through a day care centre, social and educational facilities
	West Midlands	
82	Stafford Samaritans	supporting people in Stafford who are in distress or in life-threatening situations
83	Biddulph East Residents Association	promoting the interests and needs of residents in Biddulph East through community partnerships with agencies and organisations
84	Strokes R Us	supporting and advising people in North Staffordshire who have stroke related health difficulties
85	South Wye News	involving people in South Wye in a regular and sustainable newspaper profiling issues of local interest
86	Newton Farm Community Association	offering free and confidential sources of information and advice to groups operating within South Wye and to the general public
	Yorkshire and the Humber	
87	Wakefield Hospice	providing family support and palliative care to patients in Wakefield Hospice alongside fundraising for amenities
88	Young Leaders in the Community	recruiting and training young people in Sheffield helping to support drug abuse groups
89	Hookstone Chase Community Association	providing a centre for the community to participate in social, educational and recreational facilities
90	Huddersfield and District University of the Third Age	encouraging active lives in Huddersfield through mental stimulation and recreational activities for retired people and those with physical difficulties
91	Caring for Life	providing long term support and care to those with mental health, domestic and homeless difficulties in West Yorkshire
92	Pakistan and Kashmir Welfare Association Ltd	redressing the poverty and disadvantages faced by the Pakistani and Kashmiri communities in North Kirklees through an innovative range of services.

Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): I am pleased to announce that the Assets Recovery Agency's annual report 2004–05 will be laid before Parliament today.

The report covers the agency's second full year of operation and provides an assessment of performance against its business plan 2004–05.

The agency continues to make an impact in disrupting criminals and seizing their assets. It exceeded its targets in a number of areas of performance. In its second year of operation it disrupted a total of 28 criminal enterprises in England and Wales and eight in Northern Ireland, exceeding the total target of 35. In doing so the agency restrained assets to the value of £17 million which exceeded the target of £15 million. It also obtained civil recovery orders and tax assessments in over 10 cases with a value of over £5.5 million. However the time taken to complete litigation in civil recovery cases affected the agency's ability to achieve final orders and realise receipts.

The agency adopted a total of 51 new cases for civil recovery and taxation investigation, exceeding the target of 35. Where it assisted law enforcement agencies in conducting confiscation investigations it adopted 26 new cases against a target of 15. It also adopted nine cases under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 for its own investigation against a target of five.

The agency has delivered an extensive training programme for financial investigators and successfully implemented a communications strategy to raise awareness of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

I am also pleased to announce the agency's business plan 2005–06, which is annexed to the annual report. The plan has been prepared by the director of the agency and has been approved by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary after consultation with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The plan focuses on the agency's aims, priorities and targets for the year ahead and sets out how the director intends to exercise her functions in Northern Ireland.

The agency will continue to exercise its powers of investigation and recovery against organised criminals and others, in support of the Government's commitment to taking the profit out of crime and to ensuring that crime does not pay.

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): I have approved the appointment of a new chair, and two members, to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's Independent Complaints Audit Committee.

The new committee will comprise of:

Dr. Ann Barker—chair

Dr. Barker has extensive experience of public and voluntary appointments as committee member and chair. She has varied knowledge of handling complaints, particularly from the Police Complaints Authority.

Mr. Paul Acres—member

Mr. Acres is a highly respected ex-chief constable who has spent most of his life in the police. He currently sits on two public bodies as member.

Mr. Balram Gidoomal CBE—member

Mr. Gidoomal has held numerous member roles on both public and voluntary committees. He has experience of handling complaints in private and public sector organisations.

Previous committee members were Ros Gardner, chair, and Paul Manning, member, whose appointments ended on 31 March 2005. Catherine Tuitt will continue to work with the new committee until her appointment expires in August 2005.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Minister for the Middle East (Dr. Kim Howells): With the support of Her Majesty's Government, the United Nations Security Council on 18 April 2005 adopted resolution 1596, which extends the arms embargo on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to the entire territory of the DRC with conditioned exemptions for the new Congolese army, the UN organisation mission in the DRC and non-lethal military equipment for humanitarian or protective use.

Resolution 1596 (2005) also provides for an assets freeze and a travel ban, with conditioned exemptions, on persons or entities acting in violation of the arms embargo on the DRC, to be designated by a committee of the Security Council. The resolution also requests the UN Secretary-General to re-establish the group of experts, tasked with monitoring the implementation and enforcement of the measures, for a period expiring on 31 July 2005 with the addition of a fifth expert for financial issues.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Prison Service

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Shaun Woodward): The 2004 spending review settlement required the Northern Ireland Prison Service to commission an independent review of its strategy for reducing unit costs.

The review was led by Hamish Hamill, the retired head of the Scottish Justice Department who was assisted by Michael Cook, governor of HM prison, The Verne and Gary Law, unit manager HM prison Edinburgh. I am very grateful to them for their report which makes five principal recommendations:

Recommendation 1

the key target for NIPS should be to reduce its costs per prisoner place in real terms year-on-year by an agreed amount that is valid in the Northern Ireland context,

Recommendation 2

a wider review of the prisons estate is urgently required to inform long term investment decisions,

Recommendation 3

NIPS should urgently explore the option of contracting out the full range of escort services in preference to reactivating prisoner custody officer recruitment,

Recommendation 4

a better understanding between management and staff representatives should offer quick wins for both sides and must be a top priority for the new director general,

Recommendation 5

the development of an enhanced model to assist in the provision of regular forecasts of the prisoner population, taking account of the range of relevant criminal justice system variables, should be given greater priority than it has had until now.

The Government accept the report's recommendations which, when taken together with the service's efficiency programme, represent a comprehensive programme of work.

To take the report's recommendations forward, I have asked Robin Masefield, the director general of the service, to prepare a strategic development plan aimed at drawing up the blueprint for the long term development of the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

The terms of reference for the work to develop the prison service strategic development plan are as follows:

This study will draw up the blueprint for the long term development of the Northern Ireland Prison Service. It will create a firm platform for the Service's estate strategy and value for money investment decisions in relation to accommodation, facilities and services for prisoners.

The study will build on the earlier estate strategy review completed in 2002 which concluded that Northern Ireland required three separate establishments. It is not intended to challenge that particular assumption, but the study will take account of:

(a) potential changes in the prisoner population over the next 10–15 years and the foreseen operational needs of the service;

(b) the current condition of the NIPS estate and the NIPS estate strategy review completed in 2002 where still relevant;

(c) work in progress to clarify the role of individual establishments eg. the review of the regime for life sentence prisoners;

(d) the approach to the private sector in prison services in Great Britain and the potential for reductions in the cost to the taxpayer;

(e) the comparative risks to deliverability of public and private sector operations, in the Northern Ireland context;

*(f)*other relevant factors, including likely timescales, the merits of alternative locations for prisoners in Northern Ireland, and the employment effects in the northwest;

(g) affordability;

(h) the service's current efficiency programme.

The study is to take note of all other relevant evidence, including the recent report of the independent review led by Hamish Hamill and reports based on the concept of a healthy prison by the Inspectorates in relation to both Magilligan and Hydebank Wood.

The work will consist of a number of strands taken forward under the oversight of a central steering group. Trade union and staff association representatives will be consulted fully during the study.

The main output from the review ie. the service's strategic development plan, is to be completed before the end of 2005.

I have placed copies of the Hamill Report in the Libraries of both Houses.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 7 June 2005

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Student Finance

The Minister for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (Bill Rammell): I am announcing today the terms of reference for a review of higher education student finance delivery, which will be conducted by my Department:

> To review the arrangements for the delivery of Government financial support to higher education students, and its collection from borrowers, in England and recommend options for improvement. The review should be completed by November 2005.
>
> In making recommendations, the review shall have regard to the Government's principles for improving public service delivery, including:
>
> a focus on the needs of customers, including the provision of advice and the particular needs of under-represented student groups;
>
> an efficient and effective delivery process with appropriate use of technology to improve customer service;
>
> clear objectives and challenging performance measures, benchmarked against comparable services;
>
> the need for a strategic relationship between the Department and any delivery organisations, with clearly allocated responsibility and accountability and effective management of delivery risks; and
>
> that the service demonstrates value-for-money and is sufficiently flexible to deal with possible future changes in the higher education environment.

The review will also consider the future role of the Student Loans Company in improved delivery arrangements and its status and mission.

HEALTH

Home Oxygen Service

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Jane Kennedy): Following extensive discussion and consultation with healthcare professionals, patients and their representatives, and the oxygen service industry, I am announcing today that four companies have won contracts, following competitive tender, to provide the home oxygen service in 10 national health service home oxygen service regions in England. The four companies are Air Products, the British Oxygen Company, Allied Oxycare/Medigas and Linde. This is a five-year contract, with an option to renew for a further two years. The overall annual cost of the new service is some £49 million.

NHS patients will have access to an improved service, including for the first time portable or ambulatory oxygen systems.

There are other improvements offering better choice and access to better services through a range of technically advanced oxygen equipment that will meet the needs of individual patients, with expert advice and support on its use on a 24 hour, seven day a week basis. The new service will start later this year.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sudan

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): Today I am laying a Command Paper before Parliament detailing the Government's response to the report by the International Development Committee titled, "Darfur, Sudan: The responsibility to protect".

Departmental Report

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I am today laying before Parliament the Department for International Development's departmental report 2005.

Ethiopia

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): In response to the revised Humanitarian Appeal launched by the Government of Ethiopia on 4 May 2005, the Department for International Development (DFID) will make a contribution of £5 million to assist the poor in life threatening situations. This is in addition to £1 million contributed through UNICEF in response to the initial December 2004 appeal.

This is also in addition to the UK's commitment to provide £70 million over the next three years to Ethiopia's Productive Safety Nets programme, designed to provide predictable support for the estimated 5 million people in regular need of emergency assistance, and to tackle the underlying problems of food insecurity in Ethiopia.

[illegible]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sudan

[illegible]

Departmental Report

[illegible]

[illegible]

Written Ministerial Statements

[illegible]

HEALTH

[illegible]

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 8 June 2005

CABINET OFFICE

List of Ministerial Responsibilities

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. John Hutton): A revised edition of the List of Ministerial Responsibilities (June 2005) has been published today and copies placed in the Library. It can also be obtained electronically at www.knowledgenetwork.gov.uk/elmr/minister.nsf.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Children (Contact) and Adoption Bill

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Maria Eagle): Following our receipt of the report of the Joint Committee on the draft Children (Contact) and Adoption Bill, I am pleased to say that the Government's response to that report is today being presented to Parliament.

The Bill, which we hope will be introduced in the current parliamentary session, would take forward the commitment we made in the Green Paper, "Parental Separation: Children's Needs and Parents' Responsibilities" to provide the courts with more flexible powers to facilitate contact and enforce contact orders.

At present, contact orders can be enforced only through contempt of court proceedings leading to fine or imprisonment. Courts have quite rightly been reluctant to use these measures because of the potential negative impact on the children involved. That is why they need additional, more flexible and realistic powers, of the sort that this Bill will provide. It will allow the courts to:

(a) direct parties in a contact case to undertake a "contact activity" such as attending information sessions, meetings with a counsellor, parenting programmes/classes, or other activities designed to deal with contact disputes; and

(b) attach conditions to contact orders which may require a party to undertake a contact activity.

Where a contact order has been breached, courts will be able to:

(a) impose community-based "enforcement orders"; or

(b) award financial compensation from one party to another (for example, where the cost of a holiday has been lost).

In addition, the Bill provides a statutory framework for the imposition of restrictions on inter-country adoptions from particular countries where there are concerns about adoption processes there.

We are very grateful to the Committee for the detailed consideration it gave to this Bill, and were pleased that much of the report has chimed so closely with our own thinking and approach in developing the Bill. It was particularly helpful that the Committee considered some issues where we thought that greater examination would be important, and we were pleased that the Committee agreed with us that the use of electronic tagging would be disproportionate. We will therefore remove that provision, which appeared in square brackets in the draft Bill, from the Bill as introduced.

Most importantly, it is gratifying that the Committee has not recommended any change in the fundamentals of the Bill on either contact or inter-country adoption, and agrees with our firm belief that the welfare of children must remain the paramount consideration of the courts when determining any question in relation to their upbringing.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill before this House will establish a new non-departmental public body, Natural England, to conserve and enhance the resource of nature while realising the social and economic benefits for the people of England. The establishment of a single independent statutory organisation championing integrated resource management, nature conservation, biodiversity, landscape access and recreation will be a significant step forward building on the world-class strengths and scientific and other expertise of the existing organisations. Establishment of Natural England will contribute at least £6.5 million cumulative efficiencies by 2007–08, with further efficiencies in 2008–09 and 2009–10.

In order to establish, as early as possible, the benefits from creating this body—with a new and independent culture, delivering services in a more efficient, flexible and co-ordinated way—my Department proposes to undertake essential preparatory work relating to the appointment of the chair, chief executive officer and board members of Natural England. In accordance with the rules on Government accounting, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will seek parliamentary approval for additional resources of £360,000 for this new service in a supplementary estimate following, or just before, Royal Assent. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure of £360,000 will be met by a repayable cash advance from the Contingencies Fund.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Consular Fees Order 2005-06-08

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has recently undertaken a review of the fees charged for visa and consular services overseas. On 7 June 2005 Her Majesty in Council approved the Consular Fees Order 2005. This revokes and replaces the Consular Fees Order (No 2) 1999. The Government are today announcing new fees to be charged under this Order with effect from 1 July 2005.

The Order consolidates and re-categorises some of the fees that have previously been charged. It increases fees for notarial services, estate administration, attendances, matters undertaken relating to legal proceedings and repatriation and financial assistance. It raises fees for consular assistance in births, deaths, marriages and shipping, seamen and kindred matters. The Order also increases fees for certain passports and visas and for certain searches undertaken by consular officials.

Where consular fees have been raised then, in most cases, these fees have been increased by between 10 and 20 per cent. Overseas passport fees are raised from £56.50 to £69 (standard passport for those 16 years or over), from £36.50 to £45 (standard passports for those under 16) and from £67.70 to £82 (48 page passport). The fee for amending an existing passport abroad will be increased from £46.90 to £57. The Order also raises the fee for issuing emergency passports from £35.50 to £43.50 and temporary passport fees are increased from £45.60 to £55.

Fees for multiple entry visas valid for between one and 10 years that ranged from between £60 and £150 have been consolidated in the Order to one fee of £85. The Order increases the fees for transit visas from £27 to £30 and for six-month multiple entry visas from £36 to £50. The Order also raises previously anomalous fees for returning residents, working holiday-makers, students, au pairs and those in employment or self-employed for under six months from £36 to £85. The fee for receiving an application for entry clearance (other than to the United Kingdom or the Crown Dependencies) is raised from £22 to £30.

The Order reduces the fees for a certificate of entitlement to right of abode from £110 to £85. Following the introduction of photo vignette visas the fee for a declaration of identity became obsolete and has been removed. This Order also deletes provision for gratis visas to be issued to citizens of the former Soviet Union following the abrogation of a bilateral agreement with former Soviet Union states.

In setting the new visa fees we have taken account of the views of those in the education sector, for whom the increase in the visa fee for students will be unwelcome. We recognise that international students bring significant economic and social benefits to the UK. UKvisas is committed to working closely with the education sector in the context of IND's new Joint Education Task Force to ensure that we have a genuine and informed dialogue with the education sector about immigration matters and develop better capacity to improve the evidence base on international students.

But it is right that those who benefit from consular and visa services should meet the cost of them, rather than the UK taxpayer. The new fees represent the full economic cost of what we do, and will ensure that British missions overseas continue to provide a high standard of service to visa and consular customers. They will also enable further investment in improvements to service delivery and the effectiveness of immigration control, as set out in the five-year strategy for immigration and asylum, and in consular services, as set out in the 2004 Consular Strategy.

The new fees are included in the table:

Table of fees for Consular and Visa services

	Fee (£)
1. Preparing any certificate, declaration or document not otherwise provided for—	
(a) in standard form, per copy	23.50
(b) not in standard form, per 100 words—	
(i) in English	29.50
(ii) in any other language	47.00
2. Preparing or signing, or both, a declaration of existence Except in connection with pay or pensions payable by a department of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom or of any other Government within the Commonwealth.	11.50
3.—2. Attesting or legalising a signature or seal except where— (a) the signature or seal is on a certificate or survey of foreign passenger ships running to or from the United Kingdom, or (b) the signature or seal is on a document required for the deposit or withdrawal of money in or from any British Post Office or other Government Savings Bank, or (c) the signature or seal is in connection with stocks or bonds on the registers of the Post Office, with Savings Bank annuities or with annuities granted direct by the National Debt Commissioners	19.00
(3) Administering an oath or receiving a declaration or affirmation except where— (a) the oath, declaration or affirmation is made under the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 or in connection with the loss of a passport, or (b) fee 17, 22, 23, 25, 34 or 35 is to be taken	35.00
4. Supplying witnesses, for each witness	14.00
5. Initialling alterations in any document not prepared by the consular officer or marking exhibits, for each initialling or marking	7.00
6. Making or verifying (including certifying where necessary) a copy of a document—	
(a) in typescript or made by photographic process outside the consular premises, for each page	23.50
(b) by photographic process, if the copy is made in the consular premises, for each page (with a minimum charge of £17.50)	3.50
7. Uniting documents and sealing the fastening (except where fee 35 is applicable), or affixing a photograph to a document not prepared by the consular officer and if necessary certifying it (except where fee 17 is applicable)	14.00
8. Obtaining a legalisation or other certification from another authority upon any document in addition to costs, if any	29.50
9. Supplying certified copies of documents forming part of the records of a court which is, or was formerly, established under the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts 1890 and 1913—for every page	41.00

Table of fees for Consular and Visa services

	Fee (£)
10. Making or verifying (including certifying where necessary) a translation in writing of a document or part of a document, for each 100 words or characters (or part thereof) in the foreign language—	
(a) from or into Amharic, Chinese, Japanese or Korean (three Japanese *Kana* being counted as one character when used independently)	47.00
(b) from or into any other language except where fee 25 or 37 is to be taken	29.50
11. Translating and interpreting *viva voce* (except where necessary for the performance of official duties)—for every 15 minutes	21.00
12. Issuing a passport of not more than 32 pages which includes replacing an expired passport, issuing a new passport of full validity when an original passport of restricted validity is unavailable, and, for applications made in the United Kingdom only, issuing a new passport with amended personal details—	
(a) for applications made by post in the United Kingdom	
(i) where the applicant is aged 16 years or over	42.00
(ii) where the applicant is under 16 years old (for a passport valid for 5 years)	25.00
(b) for applications made in person in the United Kingdom	
(i) where the applicant is aged 16 years or over using the fast-track service	70.00
(ii) where the applicant is under 16 years old (for a passport valid for 5 years) using the fast-track service	60.00
(iii) where the applicant is aged 16 years or over using the fast-track collect service	83.50
(iv) where the applicant is under 16 years old (for a passport valid for 5 years) using the fast-track collect service	70.50
(v) where the applicant is aged 16 years or over using the premium service	89.00
(vi) where the applicant is under 16 years old (for a passport valid for 5 years) using the premium service	71.00
(c) for applications made abroad	
(i) where the applicant is aged 16 years or over	69.00
(ii) where the applicant is under 16 years old (for a passport valid for 5 years)	45.00
13. Issuing a passport of 48 pages which includes replacing an expired passport, and issuing a new passport of full validity when an original passport of restricted validity is unavailable, and, for applications made in the United Kingdom only, issuing a new passport with amended personal details—	
(a) for applications made by post in the United Kingdom	54.50
(b) for applications made in person in the United Kingdom	
(i) using the fast-track service	71.00
(ii) using the fast-track collect service	84.50
(iii) using the premium service	95.50
(c) for applications made abroad	82.00
14. Issuing a collective passport—	
(a) for applications made by post in the United Kingdom	39.00
(b) for applications made in person in the United Kingdom	54.00
15. Amending or extending an existing passport where the application is made abroad	57.00
16.—3. Receiving an application for entry clearance (other than for the United Kingdom or for the Crown Dependencies)	30.00
(2) Preparing or forwarding, or both, any letter, certificate, declaration or other document which may be required by an authority in any country or territory in connection with an application for or the issue or renewal of an entry clearance (for a country or territory for which the consular officer does not himself have authority to issue entry clearance), a residence permit or identity card or forwarding any other certificate or document (except a Home Office travel document and applications for registration and naturalisation)	41.00
(3) Preparing or forwarding, or both, an application for registration or naturalisation to the Home Office	41.00
17.—4. Issuing and, where required, preparing an Emergency Passport or other document not otherwise provided for in lieu of a passport	43.50
(2) Issuing a Temporary Passport valid for not more than one year	55.00
18.—5. Receiving, outside the United Kingdom, an application for—	
(a) a visa for passing through the United Kingdom without entering it	30.00
(b) entry clearance for passing through the United Kingdom	
(c) entry clearance ,	
(i) as a visitor, in each case for single, double and multiple entries valid for up to six months from the date of issue	50.00
(ii) for settlement	260.00
(iii) for marriage	260.00
(iv) for any purpose other than those listed in paragraphs *(a)* and *(b)* and sub- paragraphs *(i)*, *(ii)* and *(iii)* listed above	85.00
(d) a certificate of entitlement to the right of abode	85.00
(3) The fees prescribed in paragraph (1) apply in relation to entry clearance for the Crown Dependencies as they apply in relation to entry clearances for the United Kingdom.	
(4) Receiving in the United Kingdom an application made in the United Kingdom for a certificate of entitlement to the right of abode	20.00
19. Renewing a Travel Certificate, a certificate of identity or other travel document on behalf of a Commonwealth country or of a dependency of a Commonwealth country except where fee 21 is to be taken	41.00
20. Renewing a Travel Certificate, a certificate of identity or other travel document on behalf of a dependency of the United Kingdom except where fee 21 is to be taken	41.00
21. Revalidating or renewing a Seaman's Certificate of Nationality and Identity or a Seaman's Identity Book in addition to fee 16 where applicable	41.00
22. Receiving notice of an intended marriage	41.00
23. Solemnising or attending a marriage under the Foreign Marriage Acts 1892 and 1947, administering oaths to the parties and registering the marriage	88.00
24. Issuing in English or in the local language a certificate that no impediment to an intended marriage has been shown to exist	41.00
25. Transmitting a record of a marriage under the local law to the appropriate Registrar General in accordance with Article	

Table of fees for Consular and Visa services

	Fee (£)
7(1) of the Foreign Marriage Order 1970, including the provision of any necessary certification	23.50
26. Issuing a "certificate de coutume" for an intended marriage in accordance with the local law	41.00
27. Registering a birth or death in addition to fee 29 where applicable	64.50
28. Making an addition to or correction in the consular register of births, deaths or marriages at the request of the parties concerned	23.50
29. Furnishing a certified copy of an entry in the consular register of births, deaths or marriages in addition to fee 30 or fee 27 where applicable	41.00
30. Making a search in—	
(a) the consular registers of births, deaths or marriages where the number or date of entry is not provided	41.00
(b) the records of the United Kingdom Passport Agency where the request originates in the United Kingdom	10.00
(c) any other records or archives of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in addition to fee 29 where applicable	72.00
31. Having a search made for, or obtaining copies of, or both, entries in the local registers or records not kept by a consular officer—for an entry in a local register of births, deaths or marriages or for any other document in addition to costs exceeding £5.00	84.50
32. Administering in full or in part, safeguarding, or arranging the transmission of all or part of the personal effects and other estate of a deceased person or proceeds thereof, excepting the wages and personal effects of a seaman and except where the gross current market value is less than £1,000, on the amount of the gross current market value	2% rounded to the nearest £10.00
but with a fee, where a local lawyer is employed and the matters or things to be done by the consular officer are nominal, of	53.00
33. Attending (except in connection with commercial enquiries) for each hour or lesser period, including if appropriate the time taken in proceeding from a reasonable point of departure and in returning to a reasonable point—	
(a) at the consular premises or elsewhere during customary business hours except that where the attendance is for the purpose of supervising an examination and two or more persons are sitting examinations at the same time the fee may be apportioned between them	84.50
(b) at the consular premises or elsewhere outside customary business hours	84.50
with a maximum in any one period of 24 hours for each consular officer of	610.00
34. Presiding at the taking of evidence under a commission or order from a Court, including any matter or thing done by the consular officer as examiner—	
(a) for the first two hours or less on the first day	168.50
(b) for each additional hour or less	84.50
35. Providing evidence of service or attempted service in addition to fee 33 or 36	84.50
36. Providing the services of a consular officer or consular employee—	
(a) to assist the consular officer in the taking of evidence under a commission or order from a Court, for each such person—	
for each hour or less	84.50
(b) to effect or endeavour to effect service of a document, for each hour or shorter period elsewhere than at the consular premises—	
during customary business hours	84.50
outside customary business hours	105.50
37. Forwarding a request to a local authority for the taking of evidence or the service of a document, where necessary, certifying the accuracy of a translation accompanying the document	84.50
38. Arranging the repatriation of a person or a group of persons of the same family and travelling together	84.50
39. Arranging for currency to be made available against the payment of a sterling cheque or against the deposit elsewhere of funds with or to the order of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in addition to fee 33 where applicable	42.50
40. Granting or considering whether to grant a provisional certificate of registry, whether the owner is a private individual or body corporate	246.00
41. Receiving a return of the birth or death of any person on board a ship and endorsing the agreement with the crew accordingly	35.50
42. Examining or arranging for the examination of provisions or water, payable by the party who proves to be in default in addition to the cost, if any, of survey	35.50
43. Noting a marine protest and furnishing one certified copy if required	29.50
for every further copy	29.50
44. Extending a marine protest, filing the original and furnishing one certified copy if required—	
(a) for any number of words up to 200, excluding the declaratory clause	70.50
(b) for every subsequent 100 words or less	29.50
in addition to fees 1 and 3 where applicable	
45. Making a request, or issuing or arranging for the issue of a document, in connection with a survey of a ship—	
(a) for the purposes of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974 (SOLAS) or of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973 as modified by its Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL)	47.00
(b) for any other purpose	84.50
in addition to fee 6 where applicable	
46. Issuing a bill of health	29.50
47. Preparing or signing, or both, any document, whether required by the Merchant Shipping Acts or by the local authorities, relating to the master or the members of the crew of a ship, to their numbers, names or other details, or to their engagement, discharge, desertion or death except where—	47.00
(a) fee 41 is taken in addition to fee 33, or	
(b) a death inquiry is held under section 271 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995	
48. Signing and, if required, sealing any documents at the request of the master of the ship except where—	47.00
(a) this is required under the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, or	
(b) fee 47 is taken	

Table of fees for Consular and Visa services

	Fee (£)
49. Inspecting—	
(a) a ship's papers when required to enable a consular officer to do any matter or thing in respect of a ship except where fee 47 is taken in addition to fee 33	35.00
(b) the marking of a ship, irrespective of the number of visits in addition to fee 33	35.00

NORTHERN IRELAND

Forest Service Agency

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela E. Smith): Forest Service is an executive agency of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland. It is responsible for promoting the interests of forestry in Northern Ireland, the development of afforestation, the production and supply of timber and the maintenance of adequate reserves of growing trees. This includes the delivery of social, recreational and environmental benefits for the public at large.

The following key ministerial targets have been set for the agency for the 2005–06 business year:

To publish a strategy for the delivery of forest policy and begin the legal process to support implementation;

To establish 500 hectares of new plantations;

To sell 400,000m^3 of timber to the wood processing sector;

To renew certification under the UK woodland assurance standard.

WALES

Departmental Report 2005

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Hain): I am today laying before Parliament the Wales Office annual report 2005.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 9 June 2005

DEFENCE

Battle and Theatre Honours

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the Battle Honours to ships and squadrons of Her Majesty's Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, for their participation in the major combat phase of Operation TELIC during the period 19 March to 30 April 2003.

The following RN ships and naval air squadrons have been awarded the Battle Honour "ALFAW 2003":

HMS OCEAN
HMS ARK ROYAL
HMS BLYTH
HMS BROCKLESBY
HMS BANGOR
HMS SANDOWN
HMS LEDBURY
HMS ROEBUCK
No 845 Naval Air Squadron
No 847 Naval Air Squadron

RAF squadrons which were required to operate under constant threat of attack and had demonstrated gallantry and spirit under fire during the campaign over Iraq and Kuwait or on the ground in the same territories have been awarded the Battle Honour "IRAQ 2003" with the right to emblazon the honour on their standards. Other squadrons which participated in the air and ground campaigns, albeit at a slightly lower level of danger, have been awarded the honour "IRAQ 2003" without the right to emblazon the honour on their standards. The RAF awards are as follows:

With the right to emblazon "IRAQ 2003" on squadron standards:

No 1 (Fighter) Squadron RAF
No II (Army Co-operation) Squadron RAF
No 3 Squadron RAF
No IV (Army Co-operation) Squadron RAF
No 7 Squadron RAF
No IX (Bomber) Squadron RAF
No 12 (Bomber) Squadron RAF
No 31 Squadron RAF
No 47 Squadron RAF
No 617 Squadron RAF
No 51 Squadron RAF Regiment

Without the right to emblazonment:

No 8 Squadron RAF
No 10 Squadron RAF
No 18 (Bomber) Squadron RAF
No 23 Squadron RAF
No 33 Squadron RAF
No 39 Squadron RAF
No 43 (Fighter) Squadron RAF
No 120 Squadron RAF
No 201 Squadron RAF
No 206 Squadron RAF
No 216 Squadron RAF
No 1 Squadron RAF Regiment
No II Squadron RAF Regiment
No 16 Squadron RAF Regiment
No 51 Squadron RAF
No 101 Squadron RAF
No 111 (Fighter) Squadron RAF
No 27 Squadron RAF Regiment
No 34 Squadron RAF Regiment

Her Majesty has also approved the award of the Battle Honours "Al Basrah" and "Western Iraq 2003" and the Theatre Honour "Iraq 2003" to Army units which participated in Operation TELIC. Specifically the Queen has approved the award of the Battle Honour "Al Basrah" and the Theatre Honour "Iraq 2003" to the Irish Guards who participated in Operation TELIC during the period 19 March to 30 April 2003. The Irish Guards are being awarded these honours ahead of other Army units to enable them to display the Theatre Honour "Iraq 2003" on their colour on the Queen's birthday parade on 11 June 2005. They are unlikely to troop their colour again for another seven or eight years. Other Army units who served on TELIC during this period are being invited to apply for the award of these honours. Once all applications are ratified, details of the other units to receive the awards will be notified to Parliament by means of a separate written ministerial statement.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Mineral and Landfill Waste Permissions

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): I have today issued a consultation document, *Mineral Planning Authority Monitoring of Mineral and Landfill Permissions*. This seeks comments on the proposed scope and content of a new fee regime in England for the monitoring and enforcement of minerals and landfill waste permissions by mineral and waste planning authorities, with a view to preparing regulations bringing a regime into operation on 6 April 2006.

The 1998 comprehensive spending review included a commitment to empower mineral and waste planning authorities to recover the costs of monitoring and enforcing planning conditions for minerals and landfill sites. The commitment acknowledged that the fees for applications for permission for mineral working and landfill do not cover the necessary long-term monitoring and enforcement commitment for these land uses, which is not required for other types of development. For minerals in particular, given the essentially physical processes involved, the sometimes technical and complex planning conditions are the primary form of environmental regulation during the process of implementing permissions, which can extend over very long periods. They are also important, alongside the pollution control regime, at landfills. The widening of the scope of local authorities' powers to charge fees in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 now enables us to move ahead on this long standing commitment.

Initial research in 2000, followed by consultation in autumn 2001, secured a good deal of agreement on the scope and content of a fees regime but left questions about the validity of the estimated costs to authorities of monitoring. In 2004, further research validated authorities' costs and made various recommendations about the form of a regime. We believe that we should now re-consult on the proposed regime in view of the time which has elapsed since the first consultation in 2001, because of the delay in securing enabling powers in primary legislation. Re-consultation provides an opportunity to report back to stakeholders on the comments received then, to report the findings of the further research in 2004, and to propose a regime which takes account of all the research and the earlier consultation comments.

We are proposing that fees will be charged for the monitoring of all mineral extraction sites, all landfill sites and all other waste activities located on a mineral extraction and/or landfill site which are an integral part of the operation of the site. We propose a regime based initially on an annual schedule of visits, ultimately determined by the authority and a standard fee per site visit which would be set and applied nationally.

The consultation document estimates that the total amount of fees which might be charged under the proposed regime is £2.7 million per annum, based on a best practice approach to monitoring. We believe that this additional revenue is necessary to ensure that mineral and waste planning authorities are adequately funded for this important long-term environmental protection work, given the potential impacts on amenity of mineral extraction and landfill.

Copies of the consultation document have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The document is also available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at www.odpm.gov.uk/.

The consultation period ends on 1 September 2005.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Partners for Water and Sanitation

The Minister for Climate Change and the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): I am delighted to welcome the third annual report from Partners for Water and Sanitation (PAWS). As one of the leading UK partnerships, PAWS is proof that the tri-sector partnership approach can deliver tangible results towards achieving the millennium development goals.

PAWS provides a platform where partners from Government, civil society and business can work together with people in Africa to develop sustainable solutions in the delivery of water and sanitation services. The annual report documents partnership work in 2004, and outlines how PAWS will significantly increase its activities in 2005.

In support of this expansion, an impressive effort has been invested in the management of the partnership over the past year, and this is reflected in the content and style of the annual report.

With this solid foundation in place, I am confident that the partnership will continue to grow and offer even more support to those who need it most.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Oversight Commissioner's Report

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Shaun Woodward): I have today laid before this House a copy of the oversight commissioner's first statutory report for the year 2005 which is being published today, in accordance with section 68(4)(a) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.

This is the fourth report compiled by Al Hutchinson as oversight commissioner and the thirteenth in the series of oversight reports published since 2001.

The Secretary of State and I welcomed the opportunity earlier this week to discuss the contents of the report with the oversight commissioner.

TRANSPORT

Consultation on Night Flying Restrictions

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Ms Karen Buck): On 21 July 2004, my predecessor responsible for aviation, the hon. Member for Harrow East, (Mr. McNulty), launched stage one of a two stage consultation process about setting the night restrictions regime at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted for the future.

We shall be publishing at 10 am tomorrow the consultation paper on stage two. It was not possible to publish the second stage consultation paper in time to enable us to have a new regime in place by 30 October this year. Our second stage consultation on the new regime is important. The proposals take account of the responses to stage one. We shall welcome responses on the stage two proposals from any interested person or organisation. In order to allow time for the consultation process and analysis of responses, the present night restrictions regime will continue for a further year from 30 October 2005 until 29 October 2006. During that year we propose that the current regime should continue unchanged. The consultation document will then set out the proposed night restrictions regime to apply to the end of the summer season 2012.

Interested parties will have 14 weeks to comment on the consultation, with the closing date being 16 September.

Copies of the consultation document will be placed in the Library of the House and on the internet at www.aviation.dft.gov.uk/. I am also placing in the House Library, and at the same web address a summary of the responses to the stage one consultation. Copies of all the responses, except where the author has requested confidentiality, are available for six months for inspection by prior appointment at the DfT Library and Information Centre, Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6DE.

The stage two consultation document will be sent to all consultees and copies will be available on request from:

Department for Transport
Aviation Environmental Division
Zone 1/34
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR.

I look forward to hearing what people have to say on this important issue.

WORK AND PENSIONS

National Pensions Debate

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. David Blunkett): On 24 February the Government published "Principles for Reform: The National Pensions Debate". This set out our guiding principles on which further work would be taken forward.

In publishing this document, the Government committed Ministers to engaging with the wider public, key stakeholders and others, in seeking to build a consensus for a long-term solution to the issue of adequate provision of income in retirement.

We and the Pensions Commission saw the importance of not rushing into immediate conclusions but instead, ensuring that we took people into our confidence and provided the information necessary for men and women to be able to make their own contribution to the debate.

One of the key principles laid out was that we should move towards as broad an agreement as possible. This is only feasible if, across the country, the debate is taking place on the basis of the necessary challenges being understood and the potential solutions laid out in an accessible and understandable form.

It is therefore imperative that the people who are ultimately affected—of whatever age—should be at the centre of the dialogue.

That is why, in the promise to listen, to share our problem, and to share ownership of the solutions, we have committed Ministers to engage across the country in stimulating that debate, which will enable us to develop such a national consensus, across political parties and a broader swathe of the British people.

The National Pensions Debate will therefore engage Ministers and others in structured events in which we'll ask all sections of the media to facilitate the programme of information, starting today in East London and moving across the regions in the weeks and months ahead.

We will endeavour to ensure that the widest possible dialogue takes place prior to the publication of the Pensions Commission report at the end of the year.

Written Answer to Question

Thursday 19 May 2005

WORK AND PENSIONS

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will reply to the letter to his predecessor from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 6 April with regard to Mr. Ian Pattinson. [198]

Mr. Plaskitt: A reply was sent to my right hon. Friend on 11 April. I am arranging for a copy to be sent to him.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 23 May 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Council Directive (EU) 338/97

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the timetable is for the public consultation on Article 8.2 of Council Directive (EU) 338/97. [270]

Jim Knight: The Government plan to go out to public consultation on their proposals regarding the use of the powers under Article 8.2 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97 by the end of July.

Primates

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her timetable is for public consultation on Article 8.2 of Council Directive (EU) 338/97, with particular reference to the *(a)* conservation and *(b)* animal welfare implications of the trade in primates as pets in the UK; and if she will make a statement. [338]

Jim Knight: The Government plan to go out to public consultation on their proposals regarding the use of the powers under Article 8.2 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97 by the end of July. The Regulation is essentially a conservation measure and its powers cannot be used to address animal welfare issues. Although we shall certainly consider whether it would be appropriate to use these powers to restrict the keeping of primates, the purpose of the consultation exercise is to seek views on how these powers should be used, rather than presenting a detailed list of protected species at this stage.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Licence Fee Evasion Rates

Mr. Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will take steps to provide licence fee evasion rates on a local authority area basis. [352]

James Purnell: The BBC is responsible for the administration of the television licensing system and maintains the statistical model used to estimate licence evasion. As explained in response to previous Questions from the hon. Member on this subject including 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1053W, the BBC has indicated that the data required to produce accurate evasion estimates includes external sources which are unavailable at local levels. The BBC has also indicated that information on evasion rates by local authority area is in any case not required for the efficient and effective enforcement of the licensing system. The Government have no plans to collect such information separately.

Licensing Fees

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received from sporting clubs about the changes to licensing fees in relation to serving alcohol; and if she will make a statement. [160]

James Purnell: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, and my Department, have received many representations on this subject from amateur sports clubs, the organisations which represent their interests, and Members of this House.

As has been demonstrated by the tax and other financial benefits introduced over recent years for Community Amateur Sports Clubs, and the significant sums in Lottery support for them which is channelled through sport's governing bodies, the Government continues to support the estimated 140,000 amateur clubs across England and Wales. In introducing the new licensing regime, there is no intention to penalise those involved in running clubs, or to affect the important roles such clubs play in local communities. This was made clear during the passage of the Act, and thereafter.

My Department is working closely with the Central Council of Physical Recreation, and other sports bodies, as implementation continues. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made a commitment to an independent review of fee levels and associated costs, within a reasonable period after the new framework is fully introduced. The results of that review will inform any necessary adjustments to the levels of fees introduced under the Act.

PRIME MINISTER

Deputy Prime Minister

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Prime Minister whether the Deputy Prime Minister has responsibilities in Government for matters other than those for which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible. [526]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the press notice issued on 6 May 2005, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Queen's Speech

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Prime Minister for what reasons the comprehensive press briefing on the content of the Queen's Speech was not made available to hon. Members in the Vote Office at the start of the debate on 17 May. [388]

The Prime Minister: Information relating to the Queen's Speech was made available almost immediately at the website of the Leader of the House of Commons, www.commonsleader.gov.uk. However, I have noted Mr. Speaker's comments and copies of the information referred to have been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses. I shall ensure that this is the practice in future years.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academic Boycott (Israel)

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the likely impact on academic standards of the academic boycott on Israel proposed by the Association of University Teachers; and if she will make a statement. [418]

Bill Rammell: The Government have made clear that they are opposed to academic boycotts.

Education Statistics (Cheshire)

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average amount spent per pupil in *(a)* secondary and *(b)* primary schools in Cheshire was in each year between 2001 and 2005. [120]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested for the years 2001–02 to 2003–04 is given in the table.

The information for 2004–05 is not due to be collected until October 2005.

School based expenditure[1,2,3] per pupil[4] in Cheshire LEA since 2001[2,3]

£

	School based expenditure per pupil	
	Primary	Secondary
2001–02	2,060	2,890
2002–03	2,340	2,990
2003–04	2,540	3,280

[1] School based expenditure includes only expenditure incurred directly by the schools. This includes the pay of teachers and school based support staff, school premises costs, books and equipment, and certain other supplies and services, less any capital items funded from recurrent spending and income from sales, fees and charges and rents and rates. This excludes the central cost of support services such as home to school transport, local authority administration and the financing of capital expenditure.

[2] 2002–03 saw a break in the time series following the introduction of Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) and the associated restructuring of the Section 52 Outturn tables. The change in sources is shown by the blank row. For 2002–03 and 2003–04, school based expenditure is taken from Section 52 Outturn Table A Schools Net Current Expenditure. For 2001–02 the expenditure is calculated as lines one to 12 less lines 29, 30, 35 and 37 of Section 52 Outturn Table 3.

[3] The 2001–02 calculation is broadly similar to the calculation in subsequent years. However, 2001–02 includes all premature retirement compensation (PRC) and Crombie payments, mandatory PRC payments and other indirect employee expenses, while in 2002–03 and 2003–04 only the schools element of these categories is included. Also, for some LEAs, expenditure that had previously been attributed to the school sectors in 2001–02 was reported within the LEA part of the form in 2002–03 and 2003–04 and would therefore be excluded, though this is not quantifiable from existing sources.

[4] Pupil numbers include only those pupils attending maintained establishments within each sector and are drawn from the DfES Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest £10 in cash terms as reported by Cheshire LEA.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school pupils from Wales attended schools in Cheshire in each year since 2001. [122]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the following table:

Number of pupils, aged five to 15, attending maintained primary and secondary schools in Cheshire LEA who are resident in Wales

	Primary	Secondary
2005	292	421
2004	299	340
2003	226	356
2002	247	370

Notes:

1. The data is derived from the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC).
2. The first year in which PLASC data was collected was 2002.

Staffing Structure Regulations

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the time scale for publication of the arrangements for the Review of Staffing Structure Regulations; and if she will delay the start of the consultation period for schools. [186]

Jacqui Smith: The Education (Review of Staffing Structure) (England) Regulations 2005 came into force on 6 May. They require that the staffing structures of all maintained schools and pupil referral units in England should be reviewed by the end of this year with a view to implementing any resulting changes to staffing arrangements by the end of 2008. Guidance to schools and local authorities on the review process will be published later this month.

Sure Start

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of Sure Start in Everton, Liverpool; and if she will make a statement. [415]

Beverley Hughes: Everton in Liverpool has benefited from both the Sure Start West Everton and Breckfield local programme approved in 1999 and the Everton Early Childhood Centre (EEC) approved in February 2001 which are based on the same site. The building was developed with local and national Government funding including both the Sure Start and Early Excellence programmes.

The Sure Start local programme supports around 1,212 young local children and their families living in Everton. Through a multidisciplinary team, a highly trained volunteer force and committed partners they are delivering a range of services including: outreach and home visiting; support for families and parents; access to good quality play, learning and childcare experiences for children; primary care and health, including advice about child health and development; and support for children and families with special needs, including access to specialised services such as the paediatrician and child and adolescent mental health team.

The Sure Start local programme has strong parental participation reflected in the management board membership with seven of the 20 places taken by parents. Parents have also been trained as researchers for the local evaluation of the programme and have been encouraged to use the findings to improve the way the programme is being developed.

The Everton Early Childhood Centre provides health, education and family support services to around 188 0–5 year olds. The services include baby clinic drop in sessions, eye clinic, outdoor play and environmental education, and reading support.

The Sure Start local programme and the EEC were brought together and designated as one of the first integrated children's centres in June 2003.

TRANSPORT

A3 (Hindhead)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the estimated cost is of the tunnelled section of the A3 at the Devil's Punchbowl near Hindhead in Surrey. [112]

Dr. Ladyman: The approved budget for the A3 Hindhead improvement is £240 million, which includes an estimated £93.2 million for the costs of the two bored tunnels to take the A3 under the Devils Punchbowl.

Alternatively Fuelled Road Vehicles

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his policy on providing support for the construction of energy points for the refuelling of alternatively fuelled road vehicles. [456]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department have given £469,947 in grant aid in the last two years to assist the construction of natural gas refuelling stations, bringing the number of these stations built in the last decade to 30. In the same period 13 electricity recharging points have been installed and 1,202 LPG and 106 biodiesel fuelling points have been installed on forecourts, all without Government support.

That earlier grant programme ended on 31 March. A new programme that would extend grant funding for construction in relation to natural gas, electric, bio-ethanol and hydrogen refueling is under consideration and has been notified to the European Commission in accordance with the state aid rules. The time scale for introducing a new programme will be dependent on the process of review and clearance by the European Commission.

Channel Tunnel Rail Link

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the implications of the completion of the channel tunnel rail link for *(a)* London Bridge and *(b)* Waterloo stations. [110]

Derek Twigg: Completion of the channel tunnel rail link (CTRL) will have two significant effects on the rail network in the south. First, it will allow the operation of high speed domestic services from Kent to St. Pancras. This will provide some relief to existing capacity constraints at London Bridge. The new service pattern proposed in the specification for the Integrated Kent Franchise will improve operational performance at London Bridge, delivering improved reliability and punctuality for passengers. The high speed domestic services from Kent are expected to begin operation in 2009.

Second, international services will no longer require access to the domestic network, except for access to Ashford International, so existing international facilities at Waterloo and at North Pole depot will become available for alternative use. The Strategic Rail Authority, in conjunction with the Department for Transport, has commissioned the first phase of a study to examine the best alternative uses for these facilities. The study is examining the potential impact of options on London Bridge Station, as well as Waterloo station. The phase 1 report, which will be completed this summer, will identify the most promising options for further detailed evaluation.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 7 April 2005 with regard to Mr. Michael Addie. [197]

Mr. Darling: A reply was sent to my right hon. Friend on 15 April 2005.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicles are registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, broken down by category. [463]

Dr. Ladyman: The numbers of vehicles currently registered at DVLA as of December 2004 in the main categories are:

	Number
Cars	26,996,000
Motor cycles (including tricycles, quadricyles)	1,174,000
Goods vehicles	2,207,000
Buses and coaches	175,000
Agricultural/tractors	315,000
Others (e.g. ambulances, fire appliances etc.)	927,000
Total	31,794,000

Driving Tests

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on further planned changes to the driving test. [488]

Dr. Ladyman: Driving Standards Agency (DSA) issued a report in August 2002 outlining the implementation of Commission Directive 2000/56/EC (Implementing European Changes to the Driving Test). The changes are:

(i) higher test vehicle specifications for lorries, buses and vehicle-trailer combinations (from 2007);

(ii) additional specific manoeuvres in the practical motorcycle test (from 2008); and

(iii) an actual weight requirement for lorry and vehicle-trailer tests (from 2010).

DSA continues to meet its Road Safety Strategy commitment by annually reviewing the theory test question bank and updating the hazard perception film clips on a regular basis.

EU Driver Licensing Committee

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library *(a)* a list of the members of the EU Transport Directorate's Driver Licensing Committee and their official contact details and *(b)* a list of the members of the European Working Group on Eyesight indicating (i) official contact details, (ii) credentials experience and (iii) at what stage they are at with their revision of Annex III of the 2nd Directive on Driving Licensure. [413]

Dr. Ladyman: Membership of the European Commission's Regulatory Committee on the Driving Licence and its working group on eyesight is a matter for the European Commission, to whom inquiries about membership should be directed.

The United Kingdom provides a member of the Committee on the Driving Licence in the person of a senior policy official in the Department for Transport, and is providing input to the working group on eyesight in the person of a senior medical expert from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

No decisions have yet been taken about any revisions to the medical standards set out in Annex III to Directive 91/439/EEC.

M5 (Junction 14)

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost was of the recent works by the Highways Agency to Junction 14 on the M5; at what times of day the newly-installed traffic lights will be in service; and if he will make a statement. [648]

Dr. Ladyman: The current cost of the works to Junction 14 on the M5 is £698,869. The lights were installed because of concerns over accidents. They are in service all day apart from between 07.30 and 09.00 Monday to Friday when they are switched off to reduce traffic queuing on the B4509. Monitoring of traffic queues will continue on a regular basis and, if found to be appropriate, the Highways Agency will adjust the timing of the lights.

Motorways (Speed Limits)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the likely effects of an increase in the speed limit on motorways. [476]

Dr. Ladyman: The last assessment of the possible effects of raising the motorway speed limit was conducted in 2001. This concluded that to raise the motorway speed limit would run too great a risk of increasing accidents and casualties. However, the Department will continue to keep the motorway speed limit under review to ensure it remains appropriate.

Motorways/Flyovers (Aesthetics)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his policy on the development of aesthetics in the design of motorways and flyovers. [491]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department for Transport and the Highways Agency's policy and guidance on the development of aesthetics in the design of motorways and flyovers is set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

Advice specifically for designers of structures is found in Volume 1 in a guidance document titled "The Design and Appearance of Bridges". Volume 10, The Good Roads Guide, is a series of advice notes that encourages the design team to seek to integrate the highway and its structures and earthworks with the landscape and to respect the special character of each individual location.

Complimentary to these volumes is the Highways Agency publication 'The Appearance of Bridges and Other Highway Structures'. This book provides guidance that helps to ensure that all aspects of visual excellence are considered and achieved in bridge building as well as in the design and provision of tunnels, retaining walls and associated lighting and signs.

Northern Distributor Road

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the schedule for completion is for the Northern Distributor Road around Sittingbourne. [417]

Ms Buck: You will be aware that in December 2004 Kent county council was given provisional approval for the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road. The provisional approval, of £29 million towards the total scheme cost of £43 million, is subject to a number of provisions. Those provisions are:

That the gross and net costs of the scheme remain unchanged.

That the scheme design and value for money it offers remain significantly unchanged.

Satisfactory completion of statutory procedures.

Satisfactory securing of other contributions.

Suitable consultation with the relevant statutory environmental bodies.

Subject to these conditions being met, final approval will be determined at ministerial level in due course.

Subject to such approval, Kent county council intends that work would begin on the scheme in the financial year 2007–08, with completion scheduled for 2009–10.

In line with the requirement for the satisfactory completion of statutory procedures, Kent county council's planning committee will consider a planning application associated this scheme on 14 June 2005.

Potters Bar Derailment

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to announce his decision on whether to hold a public inquiry into the Potters Bar derailment. [108]

Derek Twigg: The Secretary of State expects to be in a position to decide whether to hold a public inquiry into the Potters Bar derailment once the Crown Prosecution Service has decided whether to bring prosecutions.

Railways

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact on through services between London Paddington and all stations west of Maidenhead of the loss of two lines to Crossrail services. [211]

Derek Twigg: During normal hours of operation Crossrail will operate on the northern pair of lines, known as the relief lines. This will not affect the southern pair of lines, known as the main lines, on which longer distance services operate to destinations such as Cheltenham, Worcester, Hereford, Bristol, Swansea and Penzance.

Crossrail services will start and terminate at Maidenhead. There will be capacity for other operators to provide services from Paddington Main Line station to local stations west of Maidenhead.

Road Humps

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions have taken place over the last 12 months with EU countries on design and effectiveness of road humps. [408]

Dr. Ladyman: There have been no discussions with EU countries over the last 12 months about the design and effectiveness of road humps.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the merits of the design of the cushion road hump last underwent scientific testing; and what the conclusions of those tests were. [518]

Dr. Ladyman: A speed cushion was one of the hump types tested in recent research into the impact of road humps on vehicles and their occupants. The results, published in 2004, found:

no evidence of vehicle damage from repeated traverses, although some small changes in steering geometry were noted;

peak vertical accelerations (which strongly correlate to discomfort ratings) for all vehicles (including an ambulance, bus and minibus) were lower when traversing cushions than when traversing other types of hump;

no evidence that alternative hump dimensions to those currently recommended could remove any unnecessary discomfort and maintain safety objectives;

predicted spinal ligament forces were almost an order of magnitude smaller than the damage threshold for such ligaments and predicted forces transmitted through the spine were at least a factor of four smaller than those generated in discs by heavy lifting. Therefore, although it is not possible to predict the effect of such forces on people with pre-existing spinal conditions, it was considered that vehicle occupants with healthy spines were very unlikely to be injured as a result of single or repeated traversing of road humps (including cushions) constructed to recommended dimensions.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many sets of cushion road humps have been installed in England and Wales. [519]

Dr. Ladyman: Local authorities have the power to introduce speed cushions without approval from the Department. As such there are no central records which contain this information.

Roadworks

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* motorways and *(b)* trunk roads were affected by major roadworks on 18 May. [466]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency publishes a list of major roadworks on its website which is updated weekly. A list of those planned roadworks affecting motorways and all-purpose trunk roads on the 18 May has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Suspension Bridges

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the estimated end of life of the UK's suspension bridges. [457]

Dr. Ladyman: The design life for bridges, including suspension bridges, in the United Kingdom is 120 years, based on the assumption of regular maintenance and inspections being carried out at frequent intervals.

Thameslink Rail Project

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's *(a)* policy on and *(b)* funding commitment for the Thameslink Rail project is. [113]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail has submitted a revised application for a Transport and Works Act Order, and a resumed public inquiry is scheduled to start on 6 September. As with other major railway projects, commitment to funding and implementation cannot be made unless and until powers to construct the project have been secured. However, the Government has long recognised the need to increase the capacity of Thameslink, and we remain satisfied that the project meets our criteria for investment.

Traffic Calming

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what feedback has been received from *(a)* fire services, *(b)* providers of bus services, *(c)* funeral directors, *(d)* the police and *(e)* ambulance services about the design of traffic calming measures, with particular reference to cushion road humps. [521]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has received no specific feedback from the emergency services, bus provides or funeral directors concerning the design of speed cushions.

Traffic Calming

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consultations are planned with *(a)* fire services, *(b)* providers of bus services, *(c)* funeral directors, *(d)* the police and *(e)* ambulance services about the design of traffic calming measures, with particular reference to the cushion road hump. [520]

Dr. Ladyman: Local authorities are responsible for the introduction of traffic calming measures, such as speed cushions, on their roads. The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999 place an obligation on local authorities to consult the emergency services whenever road humps are proposed. Although not a specific requirement, the Department strongly recommend that bus operators and any other organisation likely to be effected are consulted.

Transport (Essex)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Government are taking to improve the transport network in Essex. [311]

Ms Buck: Over the first five year local transport plan period Essex has been allocated £154 million to support locally determined transport requirements. In addition, the two Essex unitary authorities have been allocated a further £64.8 million making a total allocation of £218.8 million over the period county wide.

The transport authorities of Essex are currently drafting local transport plans for the next five years. These plans will need to reflect the transport priorities for the county in the context of its economic, social and environmental policies. How the authorities determine their requirements will reflect the levels of funding to improve the transport network.

Looking ahead, the Highways Agency has the widening of the M25 between junctions 27 and 31 in its targeted programme of improvements. This work, which is planned to start in 2010–11 and open two years later, will further enhance transport connections in Essex. The Government investment in the whole M25 programme will be £1.6 billion.

A hybrid Bill has been brought forward to authorise the construction of Crossrail, a major new rail link providing fast, efficient and convenient rail access through central London between Shenfield and the Thames Gateway in the east and Maidenhead and Heathrow airport in the west.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Beta Interferon

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in each health board area are awaiting treatment with beta interferon. [316]

Mr. Woodward: The number of people, in each Health and Social Services Board, who were awaiting treatment with beta interferon, at 30 April 2005, is detailed in the following table:

Health and Social Services Board	*Waiting list active*
Eastern	32
Northern	37
Southern	8
Western	17
NI total	94

Note:
Patients currently suspended from the waiting list are excluded from these figures.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding has been made available by his Department for beta interferon treatment for 2005–06. [318]

Mr. Woodward: The Department has not allocated funding specifically for beta interferon treatment in 2005–06. Health and Social Services Boards have been allocated an additional £5 million this year for a range of specialist hospital medicines. It is for the boards to determine how they will allocate this funding, taking into account local circumstances and competing service pressures.

Unemployment Differential

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what commitment the British Government made in the Joint Declaration on the unemployment differential. [620]

Angela E. Smith: The Joint Declaration of April 2003 made the following commitment in relation to the unemployment differential:

> "The British Government reaffirms the commitment in the Agreement to a range of measures aimed at combating unemployment and progressively eliminating the differential in unemployment rates between the two communities by targeting objective need. It will encourage funding to be made available for research for this purpose. It will also encourage the devolved administration to explore, including in the context of the evaluation of new TSN[1] which is currently under way, how best work on this issue can be accelerated and what further measurement techniques including indicators and targets may be used in order to assess progress."

[1] New Targeting Social Need

TREASURY

Freedom Passes

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer by what date Freedom Passes will be available to all pensioners. [296]

Mr. Des Browne: The Freedom Pass is the London-wide concessionary travel scheme which entitles London residents over 60 free off-peak travel on London's public transport, including the tube, bus, DLR, Tramlink and National Rail within London. This scheme is funded by the London boroughs and administered by the Association of London Government in conjunction with Transport for London. There is no intention to extend this scheme to all pensioners in England.

The Government announced in the Budget that they would be extending concessionary off-peak, local bus travel for elderly and disabled people from the current statutory half fare to full fare. This means that from April 2006 all people over 60 and disabled people (as defined by the Transport Act 2000 and assessed by the local authority) will be entitled to travel for free, off-peak (after 9.30 am) on buses in their local area.

Infrastructure Investment (Mid-Sussex)

Mr. Soames: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what plans he has for infrastructure investment in Mid-Sussex; [178]

(2) what assessment he has made of the public sector infrastructure deficit in Mid-Sussex; [138]

(3) if he will carry out an audit of public sector infrastructure investment in Mid-Sussex. [139]

Mr. Des Browne: The local development framework for Mid-Sussex considered together with the south east regional spatial strategy and regional economic strategy will provide information on infrastructure priorities in Mid-Sussex and the south east region more generally.

In March 2005 the Government office for the south east published "*Infrastructure in the South East*" setting out the Government's thinking on infrastructure and how to unlock the investment necessary for growth to be successfully delivered. A copy of the report is available on the Government office's website: www.gose.gov.uk.

Inland Revenue Office (Preston)

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when a Minister last visited the Inland Revenue office in Preston to see how tax credit applications are handled. [105]

Dawn Primarolo: No Treasury Minister has recently visited the Tax Credits Office in Preston.

I visited the Tax Credits Programme Office in London in spring 2004 and visited the Tax Credits Helpline Office in Newcastle in August 2004.

In addition I hold regular meetings with senior officials responsible for the delivery of tax credits.

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to increase the staff in the Inland Revenue office in Preston to deal with tax credit applications and queries. [106]

Dawn Primarolo: The Department keeps its staffing levels under constant review.

National Census

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to review the process of collecting data for the national census. [132]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Amess, dated 23 May 2005:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales I have been asked to reply to your recent questions asking what plans there are to review the process of collecting data for the national census. (132)

The Office for National Statistics published in March 2004 an information paper which set out the proposed design for the 2011 census. This document can be found on our website at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk = 10790

Included in the design are proposals to have flexibility in data collection by providing various ways in which the public might respond. Alternative collection methods offer opportunities for increased coverage and allow investigation of suitable completion methods for disadvantaged groups such as the visually impaired. Advances in technology may present further alternatives but the present design covers collection via paper, internet and telephone.

At this stage we see the internet as having the possibility of quite radically changing the range of languages we could use for the census, and the timing and quality of response, although this depends on our processes for effectively developing a register of households, which is in hand elsewhere in Government.

The proposed design will be evaluated in a major field test in 2007.

Morbidity Rates

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the death rate has been among people aged over 75 years in each of the last 24 months, broken down by major cause of death. [257]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Andrew Lansley, dated 23 May 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the death rate has been among people aged over 75 years in each of the last 24 months, broken down by major cause of death. (257)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. The attached table shows the crude annual death rate at ages 75 and over and the number of deaths in each month in 2002 and 2003 at this age. Figures are given for five major cause groups, based on chapters of the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10).

Crude annual death rate[1] and number of deaths occurring in each month for the five most common cause groups[2], in persons aged 75 and over, England and Wales, 2002 and 2003[3]

	All causes	Circulatory diseases	Neoplasms	Respiratory diseases	Digestive diseases	Mental disorders	Other causes
2002							
Death rate	8,695.3	3,765.8	1,751.0	1,360.0	340.4	309.0	1,169.1
Number of deaths in:							
All months	348,221	150,808	70,121	54,464	13,634	12,375	46,819
January	37,563	15,786	6,390	7,838	1,250	1,524	4,775
February	28,952	12,541	5,270	5,193	1,090	1,063	3,795
March	30,606	13,396	5,986	5,001	1,124	1,031	4,068
April	28,167	12,315	5,713	4,262	1,150	1,021	3,706
May	27,501	12,055	5,866	3,912	1,069	911	3,688
June	26,127	11,353	5,613	3,690	1,074	827	3,570
July	26,751	11,580	5,853	3,711	1,032	876	3,699
August	25,927	11,084	5,806	3,438	1,114	822	3,663
September	25,672	11,170	5,619	3,380	1,129	875	3,499
October	29,220	12,742	6,149	4,177	1,158	1,086	3,908
November	28,405	12,347	5,695	4,340	1,140	1,061	3,822
December	33,330	14,439	6,161	5,522	1,304	1,278	4,626

Crude annual death rate[1] and number of deaths occurring in each month for the five most common cause groups[2], in persons aged 75 and over, England and Wales, 2002 and 2003[3]

	All causes	*Circulatory diseases*	*Neoplasms*	*Respiratory diseases*	*Digestive diseases*	*Mental disorders*	*Other causes*
2003							
Death rate	8,780.3	3,698.6	1,743.3	1451.1	347.1	321.8	1,218.5
Number of deaths in:							
All months	354,196	149,201	70,326	58,536	14,000	12,980	49,153
January	34,471	14,674	6,056	6,410	1,264	1,309	4,758
February	29,730	12,562	5,511	5,172	1,208	1,092	4,185
March	31,256	13,392	6,066	5,267	1,149	1,107	4,275
April	29,628	12,715	5,663	4,963	1,186	1,042	4,059
May	28,336	12,148	5,804	4,355	1,201	942	3,886
June	25,687	10,766	5,731	3,727	1,063	897	3,503
July	26,428	11,110	5,895	3,734	1,062	909	3,718
August	27,661	11,447	5,828	4,144	1,101	1,026	4,115
September	26,067	11,066	5,651	3,588	1,102	961	3,699
October	29,197	12,428	6,008	4,431	1,149	1,129	4,052
November	31,318	12,666	5,907	5,982	1,206	1,260	4,297
December	34,417	14,227	6,206	6,763	1,309	1,306	4,606

[1] Rate per 100,000 persons aged 75 and over, based on mid-year population estimate for 2002 and 2003, published in October 2004. In 2002 and 2003, there were 4,004,700 and 4,034,000 persons at ages 75 and over, respectively.

[2] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10).
The codes used are listed:
Diseases of the circulatory system—I00-I99;
Neoplasms—C00-D48;
Diseases of the respiratory system—J00-J99;
Diseases of the digestive system—K00-K93;
Mental and behavioural disorders—F00-F99.

[3] Figures are based on deaths occurring in each month and calendar year.

Productivity

Mr. Soames: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to improve productivity in the public sector. [175]

Mr. Des Browne: By implementing the recommendations of the Gershon review of public sector efficiency, the Government will achieve £21 billion of annual efficiency gains by 2007–08 and a gross reduction of 84,000 civil service and administrative posts. The Government have already achieved efficiency gains exceeding £2 billion and a reduction of 12,500 posts. By implementing the Lyons review of public sector relocation over 4,300 posts have already been moved out of London and the south east. These efficiency gains will help to drive increases in Government output and productivity. The Government have previously welcomed the Atkinson review as the first step to improve the measurement of Government output and productivity and to ensure that measures of the impact of increased investment in our schools, hospitals and other public services are informative and robust. In the year to October 2004, measured public sector output grew by just over 5 per cent. nearly twice as fast as during the previous 12 months.

School Funding

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the average amount that will be paid to a primary school in respect of the extra payments announced in the Budget for 2005–06. [347]

Mr. Des Browne: Details of the Budget package for England's primary schools can be found in chapter 6 of Budget 2005 'Investing in our Future'.

Budget 2005 announced increases in the Schools Standards Grant payment to headteachers of £100 million for 2006–07 and £150 million for 2007–08. These increases were additional to increases already promised for 2005–06. As a result, direct payments to the headteacher of a typical primary school in England will increase from around £30,000 in 2004–05 to £31,000 in 2005–06, rising to around £34,000 in 2006–07 and around £36,000 in 2007–08. Barnett consequentials arising from these resources have been allocated to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the usual fashion.

Self-harm

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the death rate from intentional self-harm and injury of undetermined extent has been in each year since 1975. [245]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Andrew Lansley, dated 23 May 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what the death rate from intentional self-harm and injury of undetermined intent has been in each year since 1975. (245)

The most recent available figures on intentional self-harm and injury of undetermined intent are for the calendar year 2003. The figures in the attached table show the age-standardised mortality rate for intentional self-harm and injury of undetermined intent by sex and for all persons for the calendar years 1975 to 2003.

Age-standardised mortality rate[1] from intentional self-harm[2] and injury of undetermined intent,[3] by sex, England and Wales, 1975 to 2003[4]

	Rate per 100,000		
Calendar year	*Male*	*Female*	*Person*
1975	12.6	8.1	10.2
1976	13.4	8.3	10.7
1977	13.6	8.5	10.9
1978	13.8	8.4	11.0
1979	14.1	8.6	11.3
1980	14.3	8.5	11.3
1981	15.1	8.1	11.5
1982	14.9	7.7	11.2
1983	14.8	7.3	10.9
1984	14.9	7.3	11.0
1985	15.6	7.4	11.4
1986	15.4	6.7	10.9
1987	15.4	6.3	10.7
1988	16.6	6.3	11.2
1989	15.0	5.5	10.1
1990	16.0	5.3	10.5
1991	16.0	5.1	10.4
1992	16.0	5.1	10.4
1993	15.2	4.8	9.9
1994	15.1	4.4	9.6
1995	14.9	4.6	9.7
1996	14.1	4.4	9.1
1997	14.4	4.5	9.3
1998	15.2	4.3	9.6
1999	15.0	4.5	9.6
2000	13.9	4.4	9.1
2001	13.4	4.0	8.6
2002	13.1	4.1	8.5
2003	12.9	4.1	8.4

[1] Directly age-standardised to the European standard population.

[2] The cause of death for intentional self harm was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Eighth Revision (ICD-8) codes E950-E959 for the years 1975 to 1978, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E950-E959for the years 1986 to 2000, and, for the years 2001 to 2003, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes X60-X84.

[3] The cause of death for injury of undetermined intent was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Eighth Revision (ICD-8) codes E980-E989for the years 1975 to 1978, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E980-E989 excluding E988.8 for the years 1986 to 2000, and, for the years 2001 to 2003, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes YJO-Y34 excluding Y33.9 where the Coroner's verdict was pending.

[4] Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year from 1975 to 1992 and for deaths occurring in each calendar year from 1993 onwards.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Affirmative Action

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which Royal Mail offices in Northern Ireland have initiated affirmative action measures as a result of an under-representation of a section of the community; what the religious breakdown was in each case; and what change there has been in composition in each case since affirmative action was undertaken. [351]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Royal Mail. The Chief Executive has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Energy Policy

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's policy is on the use of alternative energy sources. [308]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have a target of 10 per cent. of electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2010. The increase in the use of renewable energy will contribute to reducing the UK's carbon emissions as well as ensuring a diverse fuel mix.

The Government's key policy mechanism for encouraging renewable generation is the Renewables Obligation that requires electricity supply companies to source a specific, and annually increasing, percentage of their electricity sales from renewable sources. The Renewables Obligation is supported by just over £500 million of Government spending between 2002 and 2008 on emerging renewable and other low carbon technologies, such as hydrogen and fuel cells, in the form of capital grants and R&D.

Fraud

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many meetings took place between the Department, the Law Society and fraud squad police during April. [46]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department had one meeting with them in April 2005.

Gas

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his estimate is of the UK's gas reserves; and how many months' supply was available as at 17 May. [42]

Malcolm Wicks: Each year the Department compiles estimates of the discovered gas reserves and undiscovered gas resources on the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS). These estimates are published on the DTI's Oil and Gas website [at http://www.og.dti.gov.uk/information/bb_updates/chapters/reserves_index.html]. The latest published estimates relate to the position as at the end of 2003; estimates as at the end of 2004 are due to be released in June. The published figures are given as ranges depending on the degree of certainty attaching to the estimates. The number of months' supply represented by these resources would depend on the month in question, since gas production (like gas demand) is not flat through the year (being lower in summer and higher in winter) or from year to year (production is now generally falling while demand is flat or rising slowly). Gas production from the UKCS is expected to continue for many years to come but already it no longer meets UK demand on an annual basis though it does still in summer months.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will urge the European Commission to undertake an investigation into the operation of the UK wholesale gas market; and if he will make a statement. [337]

Malcolm Wicks: The European Commission has announced that it will undertake a sectoral inquiry into European gas and electricity markets which will cover the whole of the EU, including the UK. We have long been urging the Commission to carry out such an inquiry.

Recent studies by Ofgem, the energy regulator, and independent consultants have highlighted the impact that EU gas markets have on the UK wholesale market and the importance of accelerated liberalisation of EU gas markets. We therefore welcome the Commission's inquiry which should identify obstacles to well functioning and competitive EU energy markets and lead to appropriate remedial measures being taken.

Nuclear Industry

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much public expenditure on matters relating to the nuclear industry there has been since 1 May 1997; and what estimate he has made of future identified public liabilities in respect of existing activities. [169]

Malcolm Wicks: The following documents, which are in the public domain, provide information on the outturn of the Department's expenditure on matters relating to the nuclear industry from 1 April 1997:

Trade and Industry Government Expenditure Plans from 1998–99 to 2003–04;

Trade and Industry Departmental Report for 2003 and 2004;

Department of Trade and Industry Consolidated Resource Accounts from 1999–2000 to 2003–04.

As part of the Government's Spending Review 2004 the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority received a budget of approximately £2.2 billion for 2005–06 about half of which depends on receipts from commercial activities.

The 2002 Energy White Paper 'Managing the Nuclear Legacy: A Strategy for Action' set the public liability estimate for the nuclear legacy at £50 billion (undiscounted) while acknowledging that there was considerable uncertainty around the figure. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority which assumed responsibility from 1 April 2005 for discharging the nuclear legacy accepted that figure in its first Annual Plan. A key task now for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is to review that estimate carefully to reduce uncertainty and work on that is now under way with a view to publication in December. In the short run, better estimating will almost certainly mean that the estimate will rise. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority maintain the most recent estimate on their website (nda.gov.uk).

Nuclear Power Conference

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who from the Department attended the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power for the 21st Century in Paris on 21 and 22 March; what line they took on behalf of the Department; and if he will make a statement. [127]

Malcolm Wicks: DTI did not attend this event.

Sudan

Roger Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether any licences for the export of military vehicles to Sudan have been issued since 1 January. [70]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government publishes Annual and Quarterly Reports on Strategic Export Controls which contain summary information on the goods it has licensed for export, by destination. The Government expects to publish the first Quarterly Report for 2005 covering licensing decisions taken between 1 January and 31 March 2005, at the end of June 2005.

Roger Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether licences for the brokerage of the sale of military vehicles to Sudan from a third country have been granted. [185]

Malcolm Wicks: Summary information on the goods licensed under Open or Standard Individual Trade Control Licence will be published, by destination, in the 2004 Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls, which the Government expects to make available in the Libraries of the House by June 2005.

Thorp Reprocessing Plant

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy to close permanently the Thorp reprocessing plant. [172]

Malcolm Wicks: Our policy remains as set out in the 2002 White Paper "Managing the Nuclear Legacy".

The recent leak of liquid at Thorp, where neither the environment nor people were threatened, has led to Thorp being closed while the situation is assessed.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and regulators are still looking at how best to proceed. We are going to wait for advice from them before taking a decision on the way forward.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total expenditure to date on the Thorp reprocessing plant has been; and how much income has been generated by the plant during that period. [173]

Malcolm Wicks: BNFL has never separated the accounts for the Thorp plant from other areas. The data in the form requested cannot be provided. However for the 2004 accounts period the business segment BNFL ALFA, which includes Thorp, had total sales of £1,449 million. In addition the NDA, which from 1 April 2005 became responsible for this asset anticipates in the Annual Plan receipts in 2005–06 for reprocessing and overseas transport of nuclear materials of £635.1 million.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Social Fund Community Care Grants

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to improve the quality of initial decision-making on social fund Community Care Grant application. [649]

Mr. Plaskitt: We are committed to improving the quality of initial social fund decision making. For example, we are introducing a Standard Operating Model for the social fund to further improve quality and consistency of decision making and provide better management controls. We are developing standardised training products to improve accuracy.

We are currently revising the Community Care Grant application form (SF300) to make it more effective in eliciting, at the earliest stage, information necessary to enable good quality decision making and are considering reforms to the social fund that will simplify the scheme for staff and customers.

In April 2004 we expanded the social fund Key Management Indicator (KMI) from the original KMI of a single area of performance (Community Care Grant clearance) to include seven separate measures, including accuracy (quality) of decision making—we are also reviewing our checking arrangements with a view to achieving greater consistency between the approach taken by local and national checkers.

We also established the national Social Fund Focus Group to drive up social fund performance and all regions now have network groups to support the national group and provide a more direct means of tackling issues such as improving decision making and sharing good practice.

DEFENCE

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the timetable is for ordering the new aircraft carriers. [176]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Aircraft Carrier (CVF) project is in the Assessment Phase. Work continues to develop the detailed plans to take the project through to delivery.

Armed Forces (Voting)

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the armed forces were registered to vote at the General Election. [207]

Mr. Touhig: There is no way of knowing how many service personnel were registered to vote. As well as registering as service voters, military personnel may also choose to register as ordinary or overseas voters. If they choose one of these alternatives they cannot be distinguished from other voters on the electoral register.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will estimate the number of members of the armed forces who voted at the General Election; and if he will make a statement. [208]

Mr. Touhig: It is not possible to give an estimate of the number of armed forces personnel who voted at the General Election. Voting is an entirely private matter.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures he is taking to ensure that *(a)* members of the armed forces are registered on the electoral roll and *(b)* arrangements are made for armed forces personnel to apply for postal or proxy votes. [328]

Mr. Touhig: We are working with the Electoral Commission to consider what changes can be made to existing procedures to help service personnel register to vote and in particular whether arrangements can be made to issue an electoral registration form to all members of the services. Service personnel already have the option to choose to vote by post or proxy when they register to vote.

Armed Forces Pension Scheme

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons the Home Service part-time officers and soldiers of the Royal Irish Regiment are not eligible for the Armed Forces Pension Scheme; and if he will make a statement. [346]

Mr. Touhig: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Army Boots

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the different types of boots supplied to the Army; what the source of manufacture of each type of boot was; what the cost is of each type of boot; and what the life-expectancy of each type is. [385]

Mr. Ingram: Boots supplied to the Army are split into the following types of use: Combat, Parade/Ceremonial and Safety Footwear. Most boots are sourced through a prime contract placed for footwear, although some boots are procured on other contracts. Manufacture of boots is carried out world-wide, including the UK. Costs for each type of boot vary from item to item and fall within the following price ranges: Combat £15–£120, Parade/Ceremonial £45-£85 (although for Riding boots this varies from £150-£1,300) and Safety Footwear £8–£45. Life expectancy varies from boot to boot depending on their use and conditions, although in broad terms life expectancy is: Combat one year up to a shelf-life of five years (although Jungle Boots and Desert Boots may only have a life of six weeks or six months respectively); Parade/Ceremonial these boots are repairable and can last from one year up to five years plus; Safety Footwear six months to two years.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether the British Deputy Senior Judge Advocate in Iraq referred to in a letter from the former Minister of State to the hon. Member for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr submitted regular reports to his British superiors; [235]

(2) what the remit was of the British Deputy in the office of the Senior Judge Advocate in Iraq in relation to *(a)* detainees and *(b)* operational matters; [237]

(3) for what reasons and in what capacity Colonel Chris Terrington saw a version of the CJTF-7 Interrogation and Counter-Resistance policy document in December 2003; [238]

(4) which *(a)* sections and *(b)* drafts of the interrogation and counter-resistance policy document were seen by the British Deputy Senior Judge Advocate in Iraq; and what comments he made; [239]

(5) whether the UK officer acting as Deputy Senior Judge Advocate in Iraq advised *(a)* the US authorities and *(b)* his supervisors in the chain of command that some of the interrogation techniques in the CJIF-7 Interrogation and Counter-Resistance Policy Document (i) were inhumane under UK case law and (ii) constituted a potential breach of the Geneva Conventions in the view of the Government; [271]

(6) whether the British deputy in the office of the Senior Judge Advocate in Iraq asked Major George O'Kane to investigate allegations of abuse at Abu Ghraib; [273]

(7) whether the British deputy in the office of the Senior Judge Advocate in Iraq saw the International Committee of the Red Cross working paper based on a visit to Abu Ghraib in October 2003. [274]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects that the air accident inquiry into the RAF Hercules crash near Baghdad will be completed; and if he will publish the report. [403]

Mr. Ingram: The Board of Inquiry continues to work to determine the cause of this tragic event. Once the report has concluded, we will make available as much information as we can.

Joint Strike Fighter

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the first squadron of the Joint Strike Fighter to be declared operational. [177]

Mr. Ingram: The first squadron of Joint Combat Aircraft is currently expected to be operational in 2014, but like other equipment projects the In Service Date will not be fixed until the main investment decision is taken.

Meat Contracts

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the monetary value of *(a)* beef and *(b)* lamb supply contracts for his Department was in each year since 1997, broken down by contracts with (i) Welsh suppliers, (ii) suppliers in the rest of the UK and (iii) suppliers outside the UK. [240]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence's food supply contractor (3663) is mandated to purchase British products whenever they are competitive within the constraints of Article 30 of the EC Treaty of Rome, and where they meet the armed forces food specifications.

For beef supplied to the armed forces in the UK from 1997 to 2004 the average annual value was £6 million. Annually, between 1997 and 2001—£3.1 million was of UK origin, with approximately £1.9 million from Welsh and English sources, and £1.2 million from Scottish sources. The remaining £2.9 million was non-UK. Annually, between 2002 and 2004, £2.2 million was of UK origin, with approximately £0.7 million from Welsh and English sources, and £1.5 million from Scottish sources. The remaining £3.8 million was non-UK.

For lamb supplied to the armed forces in the UK, from 1997 to 2004 the average annual value was £1.61 million. Annually, between 1997 and 2004—£0.07 million was of UK origins. The remaining £1.54 million was non-UK.

No further breakdown is available on beef and lamb as suppliers do not maintain detailed statistics.

Naval Repairs and Refits

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department has spent in each of HM Dockyard on repairs and refits of warships and auxiliaries in each year since 1997. [339]

Mr. Ingram: A record of the Department's expenditure in each financial year (FY) since 1997 is set out in the table.

£ million

	Devonport	*Rosyth*	*Portsmouth*
1997–98	205.437	200.737	n/a
1998–99	173.872	226.745	n/a
1999–2000	116.982	221.032	50.177
2000–01	175.890	145.451	61.750
2001–02	222.892	205.480	43.169
2002–03	211.638	124.235	31.729
2003–04	175.475	120.416	51.948
2004–05	192.880	70.698	29.631

n/a = Not available

The comparatively low figures for Portsmouth reflect the decision taken in 1992 that it would concentrate on repairs and support to surface ships based there. Devonport and Rosyth retained full dockyard capability to undertake major refits and repairs, and following a decision in 1993, submarine refit work is now concentrated at Devonport.

The data relating to FYs 1997–98 to 2001–02 has been taken from the Statements of Ship Refitting and Repair Activity, which were produced annually. These statements were discontinued when the Warship Support Agency was formed in 2002, as key elements of the Agency's performance were published in its audited Annual Report and Accounts.

The figures for FY 2002–03 and beyond, which are not held centrally, include the cost of work specified in the contract; work that cannot be specified with any certainty at the start of a contract (emergent work); and equipment which has been upgraded to improve capability and performance. They exclude costs relating to materials supplied by the Department and to the overhaul of any spares that can be repaired and re-used in other vessels. Costs directly attributable to the Warship Support Modernisation Initiative (WSMI) contracts at the naval bases have also been excluded.

In FY 2001–02 the Department moved from a cash accounting system to resource-based accounting. This means that figures for the years up to and including FY

2001–02 reflect cash payments made in each of those years. However, from FY 2002–03 onwards, the figures reflect the value of the work completed in each year, rather than the year in which payment was made, which may be different.

Nuclear Explosion (Urban Area)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* physical, *(b)* environmental and *(c)* health impacts of the detonation of a single trident nuclear warhead in an urban area. [272]

John Reid: The impacts of the detonation of a nuclear weapon would depend on a wide range of variable factors. These include the yield and design of the weapon; the accuracy of the delivery system; the nature and construction of the target; the geographical characteristics of the surrounding terrain; geological conditions in the target area; the height of weapon burst; and the weather conditions at the target.

RAF Innsworth

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of RAF Innsworth. [68]

Mr. Ingram: RAF Innsworth is the Headquarters of RAF Personnel and Training Command and it is currently being considered as part of the Process and Organisation Review into the collocation of the two RAF Headquarters. An announcement will be made shortly.

Scottish Infantry (Recruitment)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recruitment targets were established for each of the Scottish infantry regiments for *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* each month since January 2003; and what the level of recruitment was in each case. [348]

Mr. Touhig: Recruitment targets are not set for individual Infantry regiments.

The Army Training and Recruiting Agency (ATRA), which is responsible for the recruitment and training of soldiers, recruits Infantry soldiers to the three Infantry Career Employment Groups (CEGs). These are: Line (which includes all the regiments in the Scottish Division), Parachute and the Guards.

The following table shows the number of soldiers enlisted and the annual enlistment target for the three Infantry CEGs for each financial year since 2001–02. Monthly targets are not set.

		Enlistment	
	Guards	*Line*	*Para*
2001–02			
Target	768	3,932	469
Actual	701	3,845	408
2002–03			
Target	511	3,557	336
Actual	793	3,803	509
2003–04			
Target	747	3,814	442
Actual	697	3,566	448
2004–05			
Target	560	2,725	349
Actual	546	2,13	397

Shoeburyness/Foulness (Explosions)

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has received concerning explosions emanating from Shoeburyness and Foulness Island between 13.45 and 14.00 on Monday, 16 May; and if he will make a statement. [101]

Mr. Touhig: Three batteries were active at Shoeburyness during the time in question. One was conducting a trial involving repetitive gun firings. The other two were engaged in the destruction of life-expired ordnance.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Burma

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions the Government have held with *(a)* the Russian Government and *(b)* the Chinese Government regarding the placing of the situation in Burma on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council. [651]

Ian Pearson: The British Government have not had any recent discussions on Burma with the Russian Government. We regularly raise our concerns with China about the situation in Burma, most recently as part of the EU-China Ministerial Troika held in Beijing on 11–12 May 2005. At present there is no consensus for bringing Burma before the United Nations Security Council. But there is occasional informal discussion of the situation in Burma among Security Council members, and we will remain in close touch with these partners and other interested UN member states. We are also in close and frequent contact with the UN Secretary-General's special envoy for Burma and his staff.

EU (UK Presidency)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which events to be held during the UK presidency of the EU Scottish Executive Ministers have been invited to attend. [349]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Ministerial participation at events being held during the United Kingdom's presidency of the European Union has not yet been finalised. Each Government Department will decide whom to invite to the UK presidency events they are organising.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which events to be held during the UK presidency of the EU will be held in Scotland. [350]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: At present there are 30 confirmed events taking place in Scotland during the United Kingdom's presidency of the European Union. A list of these events can be found on the Scottish Executive website at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/International-Relations/Europe/Page10.

Iraq

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will institute a departmental inquiry into the Iraq Oil Programme for Food *(a)* to examine whether there was British involvement and *(b)* to assess the likely impact on relations with (i) Russia, (ii) France and (iii) China. [58]

Dr. Howells: There are no plans to institute a departmental inquiry into the Iraq Oil for Food Programme. We are following closely the work of the Independent Inquiry Committee (IIC) established by the UN Secretary-General in April 2004 to investigate allegations of corruption and mismanagement of the UN's Iraq Oil for Food Programme. We support the inquiry and are co-operating fully with it. So far, the IIC has published two interim reports and we expect a final report this summer. Once the IIC has completed its investigations the Government will judge what further action might be appropriate as a result of any findings against British nationals or entities.

We have no evidence to suggest that any findings relating to the role of the British Government at the UN Security Council, or the involvement of British nationals or entities in the Oil for Food Programme, will impact significantly on UK relations with Russia, France or China.

As permanent members of the UN Security Council we worked closely with the Governments of Russia, France and China during the lifetime of the Oil for Food Programme and continue to do so on a wide range of issues.

Morocco

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Spanish Government concerning its recent decision to supply tanks to the Government of Morocco. [143]

Dr. Howells: There are currently no plans to discuss with the Spanish Government its policy on military exports to Morocco.

North and South Korea

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made on North Korea to each of the six constituent countries of the current talks; and whether he has been briefed on the re-opening of talks between North and South Korea. [59]

Ian Pearson: We are in close contact with all the countries involved in the six party talks through our embassies overseas and through their missions in London. We have made our concerns on the nuclear issue known to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at both ministerial and official level, and have urged them to engage constructively in a fourth round of talks at an early stage. We fully support the inter-Korean reconciliation process, and welcomed the reopening of talks recently. We hope that further rounds of talks will lead to significant progress.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the negotiating stance of the UK will be in the current nuclear non-proliferation talks as regards *(a)* restraining the extension of the number of states in possession of nuclear weapons and *(b)* persuading those states in possession of nuclear weapons to reduce their stockpiles of such weapons. [76]

Dr. Howells: The United Kingdom will seek an outcome to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) review conference which strengthens all three pillars of the treaty: non-proliferation, the peaceful use of nuclear technology, and disarmament. I am placing in the Library of the House the UK's statement to all NPT states parties on 5 May, which set out in full our priorities for the review conference, including those areas raised by my hon. Friend.

Western Sahara

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the UN regarding recent military activities by *(a)* Morocco and *(b)* the Polisario Front in the disputed countries of the Western Sahara. [142]

Dr. Howells: UK officials hold regular discussions about Western Sahara with UN officials. These focus on ensuring that the UN process leads to a fair and lasting solution to this dispute that provides the people of the Western Sahara with an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination.

The UN Secretary-General's report on Western Sahara published in April 2005 highlighted increased occurrences, by both parties to the dispute, of non-compliance with military agreements reached with the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The UK supported UN Security Council resolution 1598 adopted on the 28 April 2005, which affirms the need for all parties to respect fully the military agreements reached with MINURSO with regard to the ceasefire.

HEALTH

Beta Interferon

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in each health authority area in England are awaiting treatment with beta interferon. [317]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect this information.

NHS Bodies (Review)

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the arm's length NHS bodies covered by the recent review, indicating in each case their 2005–06 budget, the date on which they were established and what has been decided about their future. [480]

Jane Kennedy: A list of arm's length bodies covered by the recent review is shown in the table.

Department of Health arm's length bodies covered by the 2004 review	*Budget for 2005–06 (£000)* [1]	*Date of establishment*	*Decisions about future status*
Healthcare Commission	78,732	1 April 2004	To merge with the Commission for Social Care Inspection by 2008
Mental Health Act Commission	5,218	Before 1998	To merge with the Healthcare Commission by 1 April 2007
Commission for Social Care Inspection	144,260	1 April 2004	To merge with the Healthcare Commission by 2008
Independent Regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts (Monitor)	12,000	1 April 2004	Currently an executive non-departmental public body. Future status to be confirmed
Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health	29,930	1 January 2003	To be dissolved by 1 August 2006
Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority	9,421[2]	Before 1998	To merge with Human Tissue Authority by 1 April 2008 to become Regulatory Authority for Tissue and Embryology, an executive non-departmental public body
Council for the Regulation of Healthcare Professionals	1,950	1 April 2003	Executive non-departmental public body
General Social Care Council	14,310	October 2001	Executive non-departmental public body
Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board	6,742	1 April 2003	Executive non-departmental public body
Dental Vocational Training Authority	281	Before 1998	To merge with the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board by 1 April 2006
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority	62,970	1 April 2003	Executive agency
National Institute for Clinical Excellence	29,894	1 April 1999	Merged on 1 April 2005 to become the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, a special health authority
Health Development Agency	—	2000	
National Patient Safety Agency	28,618	July 2001	Special health authority
National Clinical Assessment Authority	—	2001	Merged with the National Patient Safety Agency on 1 April 2005
Health Protection Agency	228,600	1 April 2003	Executive non-departmental public body
Public Health Laboratory Service	—	Before 1998	Merged with the Health Protection Agency on 1 April 2005
National Radiological Protection Board	—	Before 1998	Merged with the Health Protection Agency on 1 April 2005
National Institute for Biological Standards and Control	19,739	Before 1998	To merge with Health Protection Agency by 1 April 2006
National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse	11,510	1 April 2001	Special health authority
National Blood Authority	401,700	Before 1998	To merge by 1 October 2005 to become NHS Blood and Transplant, a special health authority
UK Transplant	13,572	2000	
NHS Litigation Authority	14,095	1995	Special health authority
Family Health Services Appeal Authority	—	Before 1998	Merged with NHS Litigation Authority on 1 April 2005
NHS Information Authority	HSCIC 42,900 NCFS 115,230	1999	Reformed to become the Health and Social Care Information Centre, a special health authority with some functions transferred to NHS Connecting for Health, an Executive Agency
NHS Modernisation Agency	NILSI 80,000	2001	Some functions to be transferred into the NHS Institute for Learning, Skills and Innovation, a special health authority, by July 2005
NHSU		2002	
NHS Appointments Commission	5,981	1 April 2001	Executive non-departmental public body (subject to primary legislation)
Prescription Pricing Authority	75,606	Before 1998	To merge by 1 October 2005 to become the NHS Business Services Authority, a special health authority
Dental Practice Board	23,062	Before 1998	
NHS Pensions Agency	22,066	Before 1998	
NHS Courier Fraud and Security Management Service	14,897	2003	
NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency	22,081	1 April 2000	Executive agency
NHS Logistics Authority	70,658	2000	Future status subject to market testing exercise
Retained Organs Commission	—	2001	Dissolved in 2004
NHS Direct	161,900	1 April 2004	To move outside the arm's length body sector
NHS Professionals	31,000	1 January 2004	To move outside the arm's length body sector
NHS Estates	1,000	1997	To be dissolved by 1 October 2005
	1,779,923		

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[1] The 2005–06 budget figures are based on recurrent operating costs, excluding capital charges but including income from other sources, such as fee income, as well as Department of Health funding.

[2] Includes the Human Tissue Authority.

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Armed Forces (Council Tax)

Bob Russell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to exempt members of the armed forces from council tax for periods when they are posted on duties overseas. [206]

Mr. Woolas: Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are currently exploring with officials in the Ministry of Defence whether there is a case for a council tax exemption or discount for service personnel serving abroad.

Business Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated average business rates bill in England is for *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [367]

Mr. Woolas: Figures supplied to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister from billing authorities show that there were approximately 1.647 million hereditaments on the local lists for 2004–05 producing an estimated revenue of £15,319 million—an average bill of £9,301. There are approximately 1.651 million hereditaments for 2005–06 producing an estimated revenue of £16,505 million, an average bill of £9,997.

The estimates for 2005–06 need to be treated with particular caution because they do not reflect the impact of appeals against the new list. The introduction of small business rate relief may also affect their accuracy.

Council Housing

Paul Holmes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if his Department will implement the fourth option for the modernisation of council housing. [204]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to implement a "fourth option".

Paul Holmes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to change the funding mechanism for those councils whose tenants vote for their housing to remain under council control. [205]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to change the funding mechanism for councils whose tenants vote for their housing to remain under both council ownership and direct management.

Housing

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if his Department will amend the criteria by which housing provision is calculated to take into account, within the imposed quotas for local authorities, the sub-division of older properties into multiple dwellings; and if he will make a statement. [199]

Yvette Cooper: Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: "Housing" (PPG3) advises regional planning bodies (RPB) in distributing the level of housing provision between local authorities to take account of, among other factors, the capacity of urban areas to accommodate more housing. RPBs should focus new housing development in areas where previously-developed land is available, or where there are existing dwellings suitable for re-use or buildings suitable for conversion. PPG3 is accompanied by practice guidance, called 'Tapping the Potential', which helps local planning authorities assess urban housing capacity, including the potential from sub-division of existing housing.

The Government are considering changes to PPG3 to make housing provision more responsive to the market. The aim is to consult on an update to PPG3 in the summer. 'Tapping the Potential' will in due course need to be updated to reflect changes in policy.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average house price was in each Gloucestershire local authority in the last year for which statistics are available. [156]

Yvette Cooper: House price data at a local authority level for England and Wales are available from HM Land Registry and published on an annual basis on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. The latest available annual data are for 2004.

Gloucestershire	*Median price (£)*
Cheltenham	170,000
Cotswold	228,000
Forest of Dean	148,975
Gloucester	130,000
Stroud	170,000
Tewksbury	165,000

Source:
HM Land Registry

These data are published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_609382.xls

Housing Targets (South-east)

Mr. Soames: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will define sustainable development in relation to the Government's housing targets in the South East. [174]

Yvette Cooper: Current housing targets for the South East are set out in the Government's Regional Planning Guidance for the South East, published in March 2001. The Guidance sets out its vision and key development principles in terms of the Government's four objectives for sustainable development, as set out in its Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK. These are:

Social Progress which recognises the needs of everyone;

Effective protection of the environment;

Prudent use of natural resources;

Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

Local Government Employees (Political Restrictions)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will publish his Department's conclusions following its consultation on political restrictions on local government employees. [360]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is carefully considering over 400 responses which we received to our consultation on a review of political restrictions on local government employees. We intend to publish a summary of responses, and our proposals on next steps, later this year.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much total Government grant per capita has been given to each local authority in England, including fire authorities, in each year since 1997. [361]

Mr. Woolas: The available information has been made available in the Library of the House.

Ministerial Travel

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many foreign trips he has undertaken in his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister since May 1997. [354]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–96. Information for 2004–05 is currently being assembled and will be published shortly. All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Negative Subsidy (Housing Associations)

Paul Holmes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was taken in negative subsidy from *(a)* all housing associations and *(b)* housing associations in Chesterfield in each of the last two years. [580]

Yvette Cooper: The Government receives no rental income from housing associations to pay for housing benefit.

Regional Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the designation of regional chambers as a regional planning body if the majority of local authorities within the region were to cease to be subscribing members of the regional chamber. [286]

Yvette Cooper: Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs) are designated providing that between 60 per cent. and 70 per cent. of their members are drawn from authorities specified under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, most of whom will be local authorities. Each region decides the composition of its RPB within these constraints. It is for individual regional assemblies designated as the regional planning body to decide whether or not to levy subscriptions on member authorities.

Special Advisers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the special advisers employed by his Department. [365]

Jim Fitzpatrick: We are currently in the process of appointing special advisers to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and are awaiting approval from the Prime Minister.

Tenants Rental Payments

Paul Holmes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of the income from tenants rental payments to housing associations was taken by the Government to pay for housing benefit in the last year for which figures are available. [201]

Yvette Cooper: The Government receives no rental income from housing associations to pay for housing benefit.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans his Department has to change the council housing funding mechanism to ensure that the total revenue from tenants' rent payments can be used by the council for *(a)* the maintenance and repair of housing and *(b)* the staff costs of the housing departments. [203]

Yvette Cooper: There are no current plans to change the housing revenue account subsidy system.

Vehicle Fires

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many malicious vehicle fires there have been in each *(a)* Government office region and *(b)* local authority area in England since May 1997. [357]

Mr. Woolas: The information is as follows.

(a) The information requested for each Government office region is contained in table A.

(b) Statistics are collected for each fire and rescue authority area, these have been provided in table B.

Table A: Deliberate road vehicle primary fires, by region, 1 May 1997 to 30 September 2004

Region	*Number*
North East	31,262
North West	77,428
Yorkshire and the Humber	66,724
East Midlands	37,539
West Midlands	47,239
East of England	33,085
London	36,221
South East	47,210
South West	30,393

Note:
Data include estimates for incidents not recorded during periods of national industrial action in 2002 and 2003.
Source:
Fire and rescue service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Table B: Deliberate road vehicle primary fires, by fire and rescue service area, 1 May 1997 to 30 September 2004

FRS area	*Number*
Avon	13,257
Bedfordshire	5,554
Berkshire	5,275
Buckinghamshire	6,041
Cambridgeshire	5,966
Cheshire	5,689
Cleveland	8,961
Cornwall	1,940
Cumbria	2,827

Table B: Deliberate road vehicle primary fires, by fire and rescue service area, 1 May 1997 to 30 September 2004

FRS area	*Number*
Derbyshire	5,833
Devon	4,165
Dorset	3,299
Durham	5,325
East Sussex	5,241
Essex	9,472
Gloucestershire	3,055
Greater London	36,221
Greater Manchester	39,072
Hampshire	5,662
Hereford and Worcester	3,127
Hertfordshire	5,419
Humberside	10,139
Isle of Wight	179
Isles of Scilly	0
Kent	13,401
Lancashire	8,705
Leicestershire	7,333
Lincolnshire	3,323
Merseyside	21,135
Norfolk	4,472
North Yorkshire	3,203
Northamptonshire	6,408
Northumberland	2,408
Nottinghamshire	14,642
Oxfordshire	4,050
Shropshire	2,787
Somerset	3,030
South Yorkshire	17,703
Staffordshire	7,229
Suffolk	2,202
Surrey	4,253
Tyne and Wear	14,568
Warwickshire	3,885
West Midlands	30,211
West Sussex	3,108
West Yorkshire	35,679
Wiltshire	1,647

Note:
Data include estimates for incidents not recorded during periods of national industrial action in 2002 and 2003.
Source:
Fire and rescue service FDR1 returns to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which consultants have been employed by his Department in each of the last three years. [896]

Bridget Prentice: My Department collects information on the use of external consultancies on an annual basis at the end of each financial year.

Information relating to consultancy contracts for the financial year 2004–05 is not yet available.

The companies that provided my Department with consultancy services in the financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04 are listed as follows.

Companies used by DCA/Court Service for the provision of consultancy 2003–04

Alex Cameron Ltd.
AMTEC
Anagram
Andrew Gibson Consulting
Ark Consulting
Ashton Penney
Atkins Asset Management
BMI Health Services
Butcher Doulton Communications
Cap Gemini
CGMS Consulting
CMAS
Deloitte
Deloitte & Touche
Enodian Consultancy
Fresh Minds
Frontline Consultancy
Gartner UK Ltd.
Global Solutions
GVA Grimley
Hedra
HM Associates
Norwood Safety Ltd.
Human Assets
Insight Consulting
Integral
Inventures
Issan Ghazi Partnership
Janet Rubin Human Resources
JMU Access Partnership
KMC International
Lan2Lan
Liberata
Logica CMG UK Ltd.
Logsys
Luther Pendragon
MORI
Moulton Hall
Near Glow
ORC
PA Consulting
Pavillion Publishing
Penna Change Consultancy
PKF
PricewaterhouseCoopers
The Henley Centre
Public Partners
Retail Maxim Ltd.
Sapphire International
Sector UK
SERCO
SGS UK Ltd.
STC Energy Management
Sue Steel Associates
Towers Perrin
TSO Consulting
VP Treen & Associates
White Young & Green
WS Atkins
Xansa

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Yale Consulting
10 individual consultants

Companies used by DCA/Court Service for the provision of consultancy 2002–03

Accenture
Acrobat
Amtec
ASE Consulting
Barkers
Butchers Doulton Communications
Candisec Ltd.
Capita
C-International
Clinical Disputes Forum
CMG
CMG Logica
Corporate Training plc
DAR Associates
DBI Consulting
DBO Stoy Hayward
Deloitte
Deloitte & Touche
Disability Matters Ltd.
Educational Communication
E-Volve Consultancy
Gartner
General Council to the Bar
Global Surf
Government Actuary's Department
Hays
Hays IT
HEDRA
HM Associates
IBM
IconZest
In-Form Consultants
Insight Consulting
IPPM Education
Janet Rubin Consultancy
JMU Access Partners
KPMG
Malcolm Welsh
Moulton Hall
NCH
Nimbus
Northern Recruitment Group
ORC International
Orlando IT
Osprey
PA Consulting
Parentline Plus
Parity Resources Ltd.
Penna
Penna Change Consulting
PKF Consultants
PMG
PMP Solutions
Public Partners
Reward Partnership
Robin Verney & Assoc. Ltd.
Salomans
Schlumberger Sema
SD Partners
SGSUK
Skillbase
Solving AEM Ltd.
STL Technologies
Systemetrix
Tricon Foodservice Consultants
TSO Consulting
Unisys
Yale Consulting
14 individual consultants

Election Arrangements

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to hold future *(a)* all-postal and *(b)* e-voting pilot schemes in local elections. [1109]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

The Government themselves have no powers to hold pilot elections, however, we remain committed to the goal of multi-channel elections sometime after 2006. We have not closed the door on all-postal voting, but have no current plans to roll it out as the default position. We envisage voter choice including e-voting channels.

The Secretary of State is obliged by law to consider any application from a local authority to pilot innovative voting methods and we will consider them on a case by case basis.

Electoral Administration

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations the Government have received from the Electoral Commission on consolidating responsibility for the administration of referendums and elections in one Government Department. [30]

Harriet Harman: The Electoral Commission made such a representation in its December 2004 report, "Delivering Democracy?". The hon. Member will be aware that the Government announced on 20 May that policy on the conduct of local government and mayoral elections in England and Wales and mayoral referendums in England transfers to DCA from ODPM with immediate effect, to place responsibility for elections and referendums policy in one Department.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the decision was taken to charge 10p per page for copies of the marked register from the 2005 general election; what the equivalent charge was at each of the previous two elections; and what discretion Pickfords Records Management has to decide on what to charge. [90]

Harriet Harman: Fees for copies of the marked registers are set by the Clerk of the Crown, with agreement by HM Treasury, as required under Rule 57(3) of schedule 1, the Representation of the

People Act 1983. The charge per copied page is not 10p. Pickfords Records Management do not have any discretion as to what to charge.

For a breakdown of charges, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North-East Hertfordshire (Mr. Heald). The charges are the same as they were for the 2001 general election. The 1997 general election charges were:

A4 per page—30p

A3 per page—35p

Handling charge—£8

Packaging—50p

Postage—at cost

Electoral Registration

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what role the Department plays in the administration of referendums and elections. [29]

Harriet Harman: The Department is responsible for policy and legislation relating to the conduct of all national elections; national and regional referendums; local government and mayoral elections in England and Wales; and mayoral referendums in England.

Legal Aid

David Davis: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the departmental expenditure on legal aid in asylum and immigration cases was in *(a)* 2000–01, *(b)* 2001–02, *(c)* 2002–03, *(d)* 2003–04 and *(e)* 2004–05; and what the budget allocation was for each year. [304]

Bridget Prentice: The departmental expenditure[1], in cash, on legal aid in immigration and asylum cases in England and Wales for each of the respective years was as follows:

[1] It is now practice to quote expenditure/budgets in resource terms. However, since the question covers years prior to the adoption of resource accounting the answer has been given in cash terms for the purpose of continuity.

	£ million
2000–01	81.1
2001–02	129.4
2002–03	[1,2]176.2
2003–04	[1,3]200.5
2004–05	[1,4]177.2

[1] Administration expenditure covers all policy and operational resource costs attributed to immigration and asylum.

[2] Including £3 million for administration.

[3] Including £4.5 million for administration.

[4] Including £5.9 million for administration.

Before April 2003 there was no separate, specific budget set for expenditure on immigration and asylum matters. Basic advice and representation before the Immigration Appellate Authorities was included within the overall budget for controlled work and representation in the courts for judicial reviews and appeals was included within the budget for licensed work generally. From 1 April 2003, in cooperation with the Home Office, we set up a single asylum fund (SAF) to improve overall control of immigration spend. The Legal Services Commission's allocations from SAF budgets for 2003–04 and 2004–05 were £186 million and £143.2 million respectively. The figures given in the table for expenditure in these years form part of the SAF budget.

Marked Electoral Registers

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the new arrangements for the handling and storage of marked electoral registers at Pickfords. [96]

Harriet Harman: The marked electoral registers produced at the 2005 General Election are being stored by Pickfords Records Management at their site in Bow, London. Pickfords are storing them on behalf of the Clerk of the Crown, and will be administering the inspection and purchasing of the registers, as set out under electoral law.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the fees structure for accessing marked electoral registers is. [97]

Harriet Harman: The fees structure for purchasing copies of the marked electoral registers have been set by the Clerk of the Crown, with agreement by HM Treasury, as required under Rule 57(3) of Schedule 1, The Representation of the People Act 1983.

For the 2005 General Election they stand at 35p per copied page of A4, an £8 handling charge, and postage and packaging at cost.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the eligibility requirements for granting access to marked registers are. [26]

Harriet Harman: The eligibility requirements for granting access to the marked electoral registers are set by the Clerk of the Crown through his powers under Rule 57, Schedule 1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

The Clerk of the Crown will shortly be publishing a decision report, which sets out the conditions for granting access to the marked registers. This report has been agreed by both the Speaker of the House of Commons and HM Treasury, as required under Rule 57, and will be made available in the Library of each House.

Postal Votes

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many postal vote applications there were in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2005, broken down by parliamentary constituency; and how many instances of third parties returning postal votes were recorded in each year in each constituency. [341]

Harriet Harman: The House of Commons Paper "Election Expenses" (HC 260, Session 1998–99) provides details of the number of postal voters at the 1997 general election in each constituency. The independent Electoral Commission's report "Postal votes, proxy votes and spoilt ballot papers at the 2001 general election" provides information on the number of postal ballots issued at the 2001 general election in each constituency. Copies of these publications are in the Library of each House. Information about third parties returning postal votes is not recorded.

Information about postal votes at the 2005 general election will be included in the Electoral Commission's report on participation and turnout, to be released later in the summer.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the *(a)* turnout of voters registered with postal votes, *(b)* turnout of voters voting by means other than postal vote and *(c)* overall turnout was in each constituency in the general election of (i) 1997, (ii) 2001 and (iii) 2005. [342]

Harriet Harman: The House of Commons Paper "Election Expenses" (HC 260, Session 1998–99) provides details of the number of postal voters and the number of returned postal votes at the 1997 general election in each constituency. It also provides the overall turnout in each constituency at the general election.

The independent Electoral Commission's report "Postal votes, proxy votes and spoilt ballot papers at the 2001 general election" provides the percentage of returned postal votes at the 2001 general election in each constituency. The Electoral Commission's publication "Election 2001 The Official Results" provides the overall turnout in each constituency at the general election.

The turnout of voters voting by means other than postal vote is not recorded separately.

Copies of these publications are in the Library of each House. Information about postal votes and turnout at the 2005 general election will be included in the Electoral Commission's report on participation and turnout, to be released later in the summer.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate the Government have made of the cost to public funds of postal voting in the *(a)* European parliamentary elections in 2004 and *(b)* General Election in 2005. [95]

Harriet Harman: The Government do not yet have firm estimates for the cost of postal voting in the elections referred to.

Supreme Court

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress she has made in establishing a permanent home for the new Supreme Court. [83]

Harriet Harman: The Government have appointed the team to turn Middlesex Guildhall into the new UK Supreme Court. Project managers Drivers Jonas and lead architects Feilden and Mawson, supported by Foster and Partners, were selected following a competitive tender. This team are now taking forward the project to design and refurbish Middlesex Guildhall.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Ball-bearing Guns

13. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will undertake a review of the legislation relating to ball-bearing guns; and if he will make a statement. [15]

Hazel Blears: Controls are already in place to tackle the misuse of ball-bearing guns which are more accurately known as airsoft guns and which fire plastic pellets. It is an offence to possess them in a public place without reasonable excuse. We wish to go further and will be introducing tougher laws on the sale and manufacture of all imitation firearms in the proposed Violent Crime Reduction Bill.

British Crime Survey

14. **Mr. Clifton-Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of public confidence in the British Crime Survey. [16]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Office for National Statistics has recently made an assessment of public confidence in British official statistics. It found that the statistical quality of official publications was considered to be good and to rival the best in the world, and in particular that there was considerable confidence in the methodologies used to produce official statistics and their accuracy.

The 2003–04 British Crime Survey shows that just under two-thirds (65 per cent.) of the general public thought crime in the country as a whole had gone up in the previous two years. This is lower than found in 2002–03, when almost three-quarters (73 per cent.) reported that they thought crime in the country as a whole had increased over the previous two years.

Statistics from the British Crime Survey (BCS) are released quarterly under the National Statistics protocol. The BCS was reviewed in 2000 and all recommendations from that review have been implemented.

Community Service

16. **Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on requiring young offenders to wear uniforms while on community service. [18]

Hazel Blears: It is important that the community are able to see that people who have committed an offence are putting something back into their communities. Offenders wearing bibs or sweatshirts or a plaque highlighting the work could make their activity more visible.

Community service and reparation is already used for offenders—but is not always visible to the public, and is not always put in place swiftly enough after the offence is committed. This needs to happen if we are to better reassure communities and deter offenders.

Antisocial Behaviour

17. **Andrew Miller:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on how he plans to tackle antisocial behaviour. [19]

Mr. Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he plans to take to encourage communities to tackle antisocial behaviour. [17]

Hazel Blears: The TOGETHER campaign was set up to ensure that antisocial behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively by local services. The first phase was about equipping practitioners with the tools and the know-how. We have seen some good results: Nearly 4,000 ASBOs, over 150 crack house closure orders and over 400 dispersal orders.

As part of the next phase on the campaign, we will ensure we give the right help and support to communities so they know what they can do to tackle problems of antisocial behaviour and what they can expect from local services. More recently, It's Your Call (launched in 25 areas) means people can access services by dialling a single number. We are encouraging a cultural shift to encourage more people not to put up with antisocial behaviour, to signal that it is not acceptable and take a stand against the minority.

Licensing Laws

18. **Angela Watkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to provide local and police authorities with additional resources in response to the recent changes in the licensing laws. [20]

Paul Goggins: The Licensing Act 2003 sets out a series of measures which help the police and local authorities to better tackle alcohol-related crime and disorder.

The Act will streamline the licensing system with an enhanced annual saving of up to £15 million which could be diverted to frontline policing. The new licensing fees structure will also provide extra funding for inspection and enforcement.

Re-offending Rates

19. **Dr. Starkey:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of re-offending rates after community sentencing. [21]

Fiona Mactaggart: Since 2000, we have collected data which can separately track reconviction rates for offenders who have served community sentences. The first results for adults show a reduction of 1 per cent. in the two-year rates and the latest results for young offenders show a reduction of 1 per cent. in the one-year rate. The next results, for adults, are expected to be available in July.

People Trafficking

20. **Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on Government action to counter people trafficking. [23]

Paul Goggins: The Government have a comprehensive strategy for tackling trafficking in human beings which includes prevention, legislation, law enforcement, international co-operation and the support of victims. Human trafficking will be a priority during our EU presidency and is on the agenda for the G8 summit. The Government provide £20 million per year to Reflex, the multi-agency task force which co-ordinates the enforcement response to organised immigration crime, including people trafficking.

Identity Cards

21. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his latest estimate is of the total cost of implementing the Government's plans for identity cards. [24]

Andy Burnham: The costs of registering and issuing identity cards and biometric passports to UK nationals and the running of the identity verification service was published when the Identity Cards Bill was introduced in the last Parliament.

We have said that we will keep Parliament informed as our work on the costs of the scheme progress. We will provide updated information when the legislation promised in the manifesto is introduced to Parliament.

Prison Places

22. **Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Government have to increase the number of prison places. [25]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have increased the number of prison places by around 17,000 since 1997 to the current useable operational capacity of 77,107. We plan to increase this by nearly a further 3,300 to around 80,400 in 2007.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 24 May 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Alpacas

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will seek to introduce a legislative change which will define alpacas as livestock. [184]

Jim Knight: I have no plans to introduce a legislative change which will include alpacas to be defined as livestock.

I am unsure of the context of the question but there is some existing legislation which may be relevant to this issue. For example, the Agriculture Act 1947 provides that 'livestock includes any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur, or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land'. Alpacas could conceivably fall within this definition. Also, the Department issued guidance last year that, for the purposes of the Zoo Licensing Act 1981, alpacas should be considered to be 'domesticated' rather than 'wild' animals.

Antibiotics

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has had made of the impact on human health of the use of antibiotics on farms; and if she will make a statement. [692]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is increasing scientific support for the view that the increase in antimicrobial resistance affecting human health is primarily the result of the use of antibiotics in human rather than veterinary medicines.

Nonetheless, we take this issue very seriously and in June 2000, published a cross-Government strategy to address the issue. In 1999 the Defra Antimicrobial Resistance Co-ordination (DARC) Group was established. Details of the work of this group, together with other information about antimicrobials and links to related websites, are available on the VMD website (www.vmd.gov.uk). We recognise that veterinary medicines, including antimicrobials, are required to ensure healthy food animals in the UK, but we believe that their use should not replace good farm management and animal husbandry systems. We believe that antimicrobials should be used responsibly in food animal production and have issued guidelines in the Code of Practice on the Responsible Use of Animal Medicines on the Farm, produced by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). We also support the industry's Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA), which has also published responsible use guidelines for antimicrobials that have been adopted by assurance schemes for the five major food-producing species. Also, as a precautionary measure, the use of antimicrobial growth promoters in the EU will be banned from 1 January 2006.

The VMD annually collates and publishes figures on the UK sales of all veterinary antimicrobials. These are likely to reflect usage of antimicrobials in animals. The figures illustrate that, whilst sales of some groups of antimicrobials have increased, others have decreased or remained relatively constant over time. The VMD, in collaboration with the Department of Health, has prepared and published a list of all antimicrobial therapeutic ingredients authorised for use in animals and humans. This illustrates that many antibiotic substances used in human medicine are not used in animals.

A number of research projects designed to provide scientific data to inform further consideration of relevant issues are also underway. These range from investigating the mechanism of antimicrobial resistance transfer in organisms, to investigating the husbandry factors on farms which might lead to reduced antimicrobial usage, thereby reducing the potential for the development of antimicrobial resistance. Details of these projects can be found on the VMD website.

Bridleways and Footpaths

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she plans to publish her response to the consultation on vehicles on bridleways and footpaths. [147]

Jim Knight: In response to the consultation paper on the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on rights of way, 'The Government's framework for action' was published on 20 January, which set out a commitment to legislate and provide new guidance.

The legislative commitment is being delivered through Part 6 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill, which was introduced to the House on 19 May.

A comprehensive revision of the departmental publication 'Making the Best of Byways' and a new enforcement guidance document will be published this summer.

Brockeridge Farm

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to make a decision on the exchange of land from common land to access land at Brockeridge Farm, Twyning, Gloucestershire; and if she will make a statement. [690]

Jim Knight: The application for an Order of Exchange, made under section 147 of the Inclosure Act 1845, in relation to land at Brockeridge Common, Twyning, Gloucestershire was received by the Department on 2 September 2004. On 17 September officials wrote to the solicitors acting for the applicants seeking further information. A reply was received on 23 May 2005 and the documentation is being scrutinised. The procedures are complex and applications can take some time to determine, so I am not in a position to say if, or when, an Order might be made. The outcome will depend on the Secretary of State being satisfied that the exchange is fair to the parties involved, and its terms just and reasonable.

Climate Change

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the level of *(a)* carbon dioxide emissions and *(b)* greenhouse gas emissions has been in the UK in each year since 1990; and what the percentage change was in each case since 1990 in each case.

Mr. Morley: The information is as follows:

(a) The following table contains the carbon dioxide emission from 1990 to 2003 expressed as million tonnes of carbon equivalent (MtCeq). The figures are based on the 2005 national inventory report which contains national estimates from 1990 and 2003 inclusive. Percentage changes are shown as a year-on-year change and as a total change from 1990.

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*
CO_2 (MtCeq)	165.4	167.2	162.9	159.0	157.0	154.7	160.6
Year-on-year change (percentage)	—	1.1	-2.5	-2.4	-1.2	-1.5	3.8
Change from 1990 (percentage)	—	1.1	-1.5	-3.9	-5.1	-6.5	-2.9

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
CO_2 (MtCeq)	153.9	154.5	151.7	152.8	157.4	152.7	156.1
Year-on-year change (percentage)	-4.1	0.4	-1.8	0.7	3.0	-3.0	2.2
Change from 1990 (percentage)	-6.9	-6.5	-8.2	-7.6	-4.8	-7.7	-5.6

(b) Similarly, the following table contains UK greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the same period, weighted together using global warming potentials:

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*
GHG (MtCeq)	208.8	210.0	203.5	198.0	195.4	192.9	199.2
Year-on-year change (percentage)	—	0.6	-3.1	-2.7	-1.3	-1.3	3.3
Change from 1990 (percentage)	—	0.6	-2.5	-5.2	-6.4	-7.6	-4.6

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
GHG (MtCeq)	192.9	191.3	182.1	181.8	185.0	179.5	181.6
Year-on-year change (percentage)	-3.2	-0.8	-4.8	-0.2	1.8	-3.0	1.2
Change from 1990 (percentage)	-7.6	-8.4	-12.8	-12.9	-11.4	-14.0	-13.0

Fox Hunting

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to evaluate the effects of the recent ban on fox hunting. [155]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government have no plans to evaluate the effects of the Hunting Act 2005, beyond its normal arrangements for monitoring rural areas.

Fox Hunting Ban

Mr. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has to monitor *(a)* the welfare of the fox, *(b)* changes in population numbers of urban and rural foxes and *(c)* effects on rural employment following the ban on hunting of foxes with hounds. [534]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has no plans to institute new arrangements to monitor the welfare or population levels of the rural or urban fox, although it will retain an overview of these issues as part of its general animal welfare responsibilities. Similarly, Defra has no plans to monitor the effects of the Hunting Act 2005 on employment, beyond its normal arrangements for monitoring rural areas

Severn Flood Defences

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the consultation period being undertaken by the Environment Agency on flood defences on the Tidal Severn will end. [151]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency advise that the consultation period will end on 29 July 2005.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Learning

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to encourage adults to learn new skills. [314]

Phil Hope: On March 22 we published our White Paper setting out our policies and progress in improving adult education and skills-entitled Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work. Our aim with this White Paper is to help even more adults to get the skills they need to move from welfare into jobs and to progress in their careers. It builds on the infrastructure established through the national Skills Strategy published in 2003. It announced our plans for further improving adult provision, including the roll out of the National Employer Training Programme, the creation of new Skills Academies to deliver training in each sector, the national roll-out of the entitlement to free tuition to NVQ Level 2, and an improved and extended service to deliver advice and guidance on careers, training and support.

Connexions Service

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which Ministers have had responsibility for the Careers Service and the Connexions Service since May 1997; and if she will make a statement on her plans for the Connexions Service. [740]

Maria Eagle: Ministers with responsibility for the Careers Service and Connexions Service since May 1997 have been as follows:

Dates	*Minister of State*	*Under Secretary of State*
May 1997-July 1998	Tessa Blackstone	Kim Howells
July 1998-July 1999	Tessa Blackstone	George Mudie
July 1999-June 2001	Tessa Blackstone	Malcolm Wicks
June 2001-June 2002	Margaret Hodge	Ivan Lewis
June-December 2002	Margaret Hodge	Stephen Twigg
December 2002-June 2003	Margaret Hodge	Ivan Lewis
June 2003-May 2005	Margaret Hodge only	—
May 2005-present	Beverley Hughes	Maria Eagle

Proposals for Connexions and the delivery of services for 13 to 19-year-olds will be set out in the Youth Green Paper which we intend to publish in due course.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the cost of extending education maintenance allowances to all students who remain in post-16 education. [275]

Bill Rammell: The following tables show the estimated take up and cost of education maintenance allowances (EMAs). Estimates in Table One are based on the current scheme and the household income thresholds that apply in 2004–05. The second table gives estimates for all 16 to 18-year-olds in post-16 further education and assumes that all are eligible for £30 EMA per week plus bonuses. The tables also take account of drop-out from the scheme.

Estimated take-up and cost of EMA for eligible 16 to 18-year-olds in England

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Take-up	303,300	409,800	442,100	437,200	427,300
Cost					
Financial year	253	375	436	443	438
Academic year	297	414	446	442	436

Estimated take-up and cost of EMA assuming all 16 to 18-year-olds in post-16 further education receive the maximum payment of £30 per week

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Take-up	565,000	807,100	898,400	910,400	916,100
Cost					
Financial year	526	852	1,032	1,079	1,088
Academic year	643	957	1,069	1,083	1,091

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her estimate is of Government spending on the education maintenance allowance projected for each year from 2004–05 to 2009–10; and if she will make a statement. [823]

Phil Hope: The following table shows the estimated take up and cost of education maintenance allowances (EMAs) for young people in post 16 further education, projected for each year from 2004–05 to 2008–09. Estimates for 2009–10 are not currently available. These estimates are based on the current scheme and the household income thresholds that apply in 2004–05. The table also takes account of drop-out from the scheme.

Estimated take-up and cost of EMA for eligible 16 to 18-year-olds in England

		Cost (£ million)	
	Take-up (Number)	*Financial year*[1]	*Academic year*[2]
2004/05	303,300	253	297
2005/06	409,800	375	414
2006/07	442,100	436	446
2007/08	437,200	443	442
2008/09	427,300	438	436

Free School Meals

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what restrictions are applicable to the choice of *(a)* food and *(b)* drinks for children in receipt of free school meals. [214]

Jacqui Smith: Since 2001 all school lunches must comply with statutory nutritional standards. Subject to these standards, the contents of individual school meals is a matter for either school governing bodies or local education authorities, depending on whether or not funding has been delegated to schools. DfES has published Healthy School Lunch guidance in which the Secretary of State strongly recommends that the value of a free school meal should be set to enable eligible children to have a standard two course lunch and drink. Schools are strongly encouraged to provide drinking water free of charge. Pupils entitled to free school meals cannot substitute other school food such as breakfast or break-time snacks for food served at lunchtime.

School Truancy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the truancy levels were in schools in *(a)* Gloucestershire and *(b)* England in each year since 1995. [116]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised absences for schools in Gloucestershire and England

	Gloucestershire		*England*	
Academic year	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
1994/95	0.3	0.4	0.5	1.0
1995/96	0.3	0.4	0.5	1.0
1996/97	0.3	0.3	0.5	1.0
1997/98	0.3	0.3	0.5	1.1
1998/99	0.3	0.4	0.5	1.1
1999/2000	0.3	0.5	0.5	1.0
2000/01	0.2	0.5	0.5	1.1
2001/02	0.2	0.5	0.5	1.1
2002/03[1]	0.24	0.51	0.43	1.07
2003/04[1]	0.23	0.56	0.41	1.14

[1] Figures have only been published to two decimal places since 2003.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Coal Health Claims

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much had been paid to the Union of Democratic Mineworkers in respect of handling fees for coal health claims up to 31 March. [276]

Malcolm Wicks: As at 31 March 2005, the total paid to UDM solicitors for fees under the schemes was £19 million.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much had been paid to solicitors in respect of legal fees for coal health claims up to 31 March; and how much had been paid to each of the top 20 firms of solicitors. [277]

Malcolm Wicks: As of 31 March 2005, the total paid in solicitors for fees under the scheme was £493.5 million. The 20 highest paid solicitors under the scheme as at 31 March 2005 were:

Solicitor	*Total solicitors costs (£ million)*
Thompsons	66.6
Hugh James Ford Simey	54.5
Raleys Solicitors	43.8
Browell Smith and Co	31.2
Mark Gilbert Morse	28.3
Beresfords Solicitors	27.2
Union Of Democratic Mineworkers	19.0
Graysons	18.3
Watson Burton	16.3
Towells Solicitors	12.2
Moss Solicitors	10.2
Irwin Mitchell	9.9
Randell Lloyd Jenkins and Martin	8.9
The Legal Warehouse	7.2
Conies	6.8
Kidd and Spoor Harper Solicitors	6.8
AMSLaw	6.4
O H Parsons	6.4
Wake Smith	5.6
Ingrams Solicitors	5.5

E-mail

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will estimate the proportion of the adult population in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* the South West and *(c)* South Gloucestershire that had domestic access to e-mail (i) in the latest year for which estimates are available and (ii) five years earlier. [644]

Alun Michael: The Office for National Statistics does not produce figures for home adult email access but they do produce household Internet access figures, which are quoted as follows.

The percentage of households able to access the Internet from home in Q4 2004 were:

(i) *(a)* 52 per cent. for the whole of the UK
(b) 50 per cent. for the South West
(c) Unknown

The percentage of households able to access the Internet from home in Q4 1999 were:

(ii) *(a)* 20 per cent. for the whole of the UK
(b) 19 per cent. for the South West
(c) Unknown

Nuclear Industry

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions the Department has had with *(a)* the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and *(b)* BNFL in respect of the future operation of the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant (THORP) following the leakage of radioactively contaminated nitric acid at THORP in April. [837]

Malcolm Wicks: DTI officials have had a number of discussions with both the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and British Nuclear Group (BNG) concerning the leak at THORP that resulted in the plant being closed. With regard to the future operation of THORP, the NDA and regulators are still looking at how best to proceed. We will wait for their advice before taking a decision on the way forward.

Gas

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact on UK businesses of the increase in wholesale gas prices and the increase in energy costs, with specific reference to the terms of *(a)* productivity and *(b)* competitiveness. [45]

Malcolm Wicks: The impact on UK businesses of increases in gas and energy prices will depend on a variety of factors, including how much gas or energy a particular company uses, the degree of their exposure to spot and forward prices and the duration of high prices. It will also be affected by the energy prices paid by their competitors. A further sector-specific issue is whether they are in a competitive market where international trade sets the price or in a sector where prices are determined more locally and rising energy costs could be passed on.

Despite recent rises, UK gas and electricity prices for industrial users in 2004 were lower in real terms than they were in 1994. In January 2005, UK gas and electricity prices for small, medium and large energy users were still below the EU median; for extra large electricity users their electricity prices were at the level of the EU median. However, individual companies will have agreed commercially confidential contract terms and prices which might differ from these averages.

Data on the average industrial gas and electricity prices in the UK over time can be found in tables 3.3.1 Real Terms and 3.3.2 Real Terms at:

www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/energy_prices/tables/table_331.xls

Average gas price comparisons for different size categories of energy users across the EU can be found in tables 5.8.1, 5.8.2 and 5.8.3 at:

www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/energy_prices/tables/table_581.xls and for electricity prices in tables 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3 and 5.4.4 at:

www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/energy_prices/tables/table_541.xls

There is anecdotal evidence that, for very large users of gas, gas prices in the UK are above those on the Continent. The Department is in discussion with the Energy Intensive Users Group and other industrial stakeholders to develop ideas for improving the operation of the forward market and to identify ways users can mitigate the effects of high forward gas prices. On 16 May the DTI held a seminar with major users to discuss forward gas prices and we are planning a further similar seminar with smaller users. We have undertaken research into the operation of the forward gas market. The report by independent consultants Global Insight can be found at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/publications/policy/index.shtml

Miners' Compensation Scheme

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made since 1 April of the merits of asking the Serious Fraud Squad to investigate solicitors who have doubled-charged clients claiming under the coalminers' compensation scheme. [165]

Malcolm Wicks: The regulation of solicitors is a matter for the Law Society. The Department continues to work closely with them on the issue of double charging.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which solicitors are refusing to agree his Department's proposed scheme of £500 minimum compensation for successful claims for miners' industrial disease. [167]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* The £500 minimum payment is a proposal from the Claimants' Group of solicitors. A revised minimum payments proposal has recently been received and is under discussion between the parties. The Department has not yet been formally notified of any solicitors' refusal to agree to this proposal.

Veterinary Services

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with the British Veterinary Association on the proposed legislation to abolish free prescriptions for veterinary purposes. [153]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In my capacity as Minister with responsibility for competition, I met the British Veterinary Association to discuss the Competition Commission recommendations on prescription-only veterinary medicines on 18 September 2003. The draft legislation recently published proposes to implement their recommendation that prescriptions should be free for three years. Currently there is no requirement for free veterinary prescriptions.

Working Time Directive

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the implications for the working arrangements of hon. Members of the proposed changes to the rights of UK workers to opt out of the Working Time Directive; and if he will make a statement. [643]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Working Time proposals are still under negotiation; any changes must be agreed by both the European Parliament and European Council.

The Government are therefore not yet in a position to assess their impact. I will of course, submit a full Regulatory Impact Assessment when the final proposals are clear.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Electricity Green Tariff

Robert Key: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the House of Commons Commission whether the House purchases electricity on a green tariff. [402]

Sir Stuart Bell: 11 per cent. of the electricity purchased for the parliamentary estate is from renewable sources.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Select Committees

Mr. Knight: To ask the Leader of the House if he will bring forward proposals during 2005 to combine the functions of the Procedure Committee and the former Select Committee on the Modernisation of the House of Commons in one new select committee. [180]

Mr. Hoon: I have no plans to do so.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Licensing Changes

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with representatives of sports clubs which run small bars as ancillary businesses about the impact on those bars of the recent changes in licensing fees; and if she will make a statement. [695]

James Purnell: The concerns of amateur sports clubs were debated in detail before the Licensing Act 2003 was passed. My Department held a number of meetings with the Central Council of Physical Recreation to discuss the effects of the Act on sports clubs with bars, and these discussions will continue as implementation proceeds.

In introducing the new licensing regime, the Government have no intention of penalising those involved in running clubs, nor to affect the important roles such clubs play in local communities. The situation will remain under review, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made a commitment to an independent review of fee levels and associated costs, within a reasonable period after the new framework is fully introduced. The review will consider the concerns of sports clubs, and its results will inform any necessary adjustments to the levels of fees introduced under the Act.

National Sports Foundation

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether it is her policy that the creation of the National Sports Foundation should not have any impact on the amount of money directed to sport through the National Lottery. [683]

Mr. Caborn: In establishing the National Sports Foundation, we have no intention of reducing the amount of money spent on sport.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how the interests of *(a)* the Football Association, the Rugby Football Union, the England and Wales Cricket Board and the Lawn Tennis Association, *(b)* the Central Council for Physical Recreation and *(c)* other sports national governing bodies will be represented at the National Sports Foundation. [684]

Mr. Caborn: Discussions on how the interests of the sport national governing bodies will be represented at the National Sports Foundation are at an early stage. Further details will be announced in due course.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what criteria will be used to assess grant applications to the National Sports Foundation. [685]

Mr. Caborn: Discussions on what criteria will be used to assess grant applications to the National Sports Foundation are at an early stage and decisions will be taken in due course.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport where the offices of the National Sports Foundation will be located; how it will be organised; and how many people she expects that it will employ. [686]

Mr. Caborn: Discussions on where the National Sports Foundation will be located, its structure and its staffing levels are at an early stage and decisions will be taken in due course.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Sex Offenders

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many registered sex offenders are living in each housing executive district in Northern Ireland; how many of these have been relocated from other parts of the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [345]

Mr. Hanson: As of 23 May there were 561 offenders living in the community who are subject to the notification requirements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This means they are required to notify the police of certain personal details, including their home address. The information is not available broken down by housing executive district or by jurisdictional origin.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Social Fund Community Care Grants

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the level of additional funding required for the Social Fund Community Care Grant scheme to ensure that all high and medium priority claims are met. [650]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* The information is not available in the format requested.

However, for 2004–05 we estimate that the amount of extra funding that would have been required to meet all high, medium and low priority needs is £204 million.

DEFENCE

Personnel Deployments

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether British service personnel have been deployed or seconded to *(a)* Guantanamo Bay, *(b)* Guam and *(c)* Diego Garcia since 1995. [241]

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether British service personnel have been *(a)* deployed and *(b)* seconded to (i) Guantanamo Bay, (ii) Guam and (iii) Diego Garcia since 1994. [506]

Mr. Ingram: No British service personnel have been deployed operationally or seconded to other nations' armed forces to serve at Guantanamo Bay or Guam. The armed forces maintain a permanent presence on Diego Garcia, totalling some 40 service personnel.

Redundant Infantry Regiments

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will estimate how many personnel will move from the future redundant infantry regiments to fill the future establishment figures for *(a)* The Royal Engineers, *(b)* The Royal Logistic Corps and *(c)* The Intelligence Corps. [394]

Mr. Ingram: As the hon. Member is aware, the progress towards a lasting settlement in Northern Ireland means that we are able to reduce the Infantry by four battalions.

The 2,500 posts that will be freed-up as a result will be reinvested across the Army in order to produce more robust establishments and strengthen those trades critical to a sustainable expeditionary capability. In terms of those Arms and Services listed by the hon. Member, they will be strengthened by the numbers shown in the following table. She should note, however, that these figures are subject to future refinement.

Arm/service	*Posts reallocated from infantry battalion reductions*
Royal Engineers	+456
Royal Logistic Corps	+285
Intelligence Corps	+113

Regimental Uniforms

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who meets the cost of the new uniforms and mess-dress of existing personnel up to the date of changeover for the future *(a)* Mercia, *(b)* Yorkshire and *(c)* Scottish regiments. [illegible]92]

Mr. Touhig: Officers receive an initial outfit allowance to fund their first purchase of uniform and mess dress. Thereafter, a tax-free allowance is provided to enable them to maintain their uniform and dress. Soldiers' uniform is provided by the public purse.

While much of the existing uniform may be used up until such time as it requires replacement, those elements deemed essential on transition (such as cap badges and buttons) will be provided from public funds.

Re-roling

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which infantry regiments and battalions have re-roled in the last six years; and what the duration was of re-roling. [391]

Mr. Touhig: Data on the re-roling of Infantry Battalions before January 2000 is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost. I can, however, provide detail of all Infantry re-roling (whereby Infantry Battalions change role) from January 2000 to May 2005 inclusive.

Battalions re-roled to Armoured Infantry role January 2000-May 2005

Date (a)	*Unit (b)*	*Length of re-role period (approx. months) (e)*
March 2000	1st Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding)	6
August 2000	1st Battalion The Black Watch (The Highland Regiment)	6
March 2001	1st Battalion The Kings Regiment	6
March 2001	1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	6
April 2002	1st Battalion The Light Infantry	6
September 2003	1st Battalion The Scots Guards	6
March 2004	1st Battalion The Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons)	6

Battalions re-roled to Mechanised Infantry role January 2000-May 2005

Date (a)	*Unit (b)*	*Length of re-role period (approx. months) (e)*
March 2001	1st Battalion The Kings Own Scottish Borderers	3
April 2001	1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment	3
February 2002	1st Battalion The Cheshire Regiment	3
August 2002	1st Battalion The Royal Welsh Fusiliers	3
May 2003	1st Battalion The Coldstream Guards	3
March 2004	1st Battalion The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment	3

Battalions re-roled to Air Assault role January 2000-May 2005

Date (a)	*Unit (b)*	*Length of re-role period (approx. months) (e)*
September 2003	1st Battalion The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's)	3

Battalions re-roled to a Light role (from Mechanised, Armoured Infantry or Air Assault January 2000-May 2005

Date (a)	*Unit (b)*	*(c) Length of re-role (approx. months)*
March 2000	1st Battalion The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment	1
March 2001	1st Battalion The Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons)	1
April 2001	1st Battalion The Kings Own Royal Border Regiment	1
April 2001	2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	1
April 2002	1st Battalion The Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment)	1
May 2003	1st Battalion The Welsh Guards	1
September 2003	1st Battalion The Irish Guards	1
September 2003	1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment (27th (Inniskilling), 83rd, 87th and The Ulster Defence Regiment)	1
January 2004	1st Battalion The Kings Own Scottish Borderers	1
March 2004	1st Battalion The Queens Lancashire Regiment	1

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Service Personnel (General Election)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will instigate a survey of all service personnel to discover how many were *(a)* registered to vote and *(b)* able to vote by post or other means in the General Election on 5 May. [693]

Mr. Touhig: We are considering with the Electoral Commission a number of initiatives relating to service voting, including the conduct of research on levels of service voter registration. The exercise of a vote is however an entirely private matter, but we are examining whether there are any ways in which we could make it easier for service personnel to vote.

Siege of Kut

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the siege of Kut-el-Amara from December 1915 to April 1916. [533]

Mr. Touhig: The Government does not have any plans to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the siege of Kut-el-Amara. The siege was a costly defeat for the allies and both the British Army and the British Indian Army lost many brave men in the siege and the attempts to relieve the besieged garrison and we honour their memory.

Spearhead Land Element

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which regiment or battalion comprises the future Spearhead Land Element (SLE); whether it is presently fully equipped; whether the present SLE is deployed; and when the future SLE will take over from the present SLE. [384]

Mr. Ingram: The 1st Battalion The Royal Green Jackets are currently undertaking the role of the Spearhead Land Element and they are not deployed at present. It is planned that the 1st Battalion The Green Howards will assume the role of SLE in July 2005 and I can confirm that both battalions are fully equipped to undertake this task.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for the required commitment of Territorial Army personnel deployment; and if he will make a statement. [393]

Mr. Touhig: Future Army Structures will integrate further the Territorial Army (TA) with the Regular Army, ensuring a more relevant, capable and useable TA. There will be some adjustments to their capabilities to meet new requirements and to best support the Regular Army on operations. Work is continuing on these issues and an announcement will be made in due course.

Trafalgar Day

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements will be made for UK service personnel overseas to celebrate Trafalgar Day. [292]

Mr. Ingram: The annual commemoration of the Battle of Trafalgar is primarily a concern for the Royal Navy with ships and establishments, both in the UK and overseas, traditionally holding mess dinners on 21 October to honour the Immortal Memory of Nelson and all those who fought at the Battle of Trafalgar. Requests have also been received from a number of our embassies for senior naval officers to attend dinners, which are currently under consideration.

A programme of events is planned to take place in Gibraltar during the weekend of 28 to 30 October 2005. These include a Nelson exhibition, Beating the Retreat and reception, and a Royal Navy Ceremonial Guard Mount at His Excellency the Governor's residence. The Royal Navy will also be invited to exercise their Freedom of the City privileges.

UK Personnel (Balkans)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effects of the declarations to the Joint Forces Agreement in Bosnia involving Morocco, OJ L34 of 8 February on the liability of UK personnel serving in the Balkans, with particular reference to culpability; and if he will make a statement. [499]

Mr. Ingram: The declarations attached to the Agreement between the EU and the Kingdom of Morocco on the participation of Morocco in the EU operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has no effect on the liability of UK personnel serving in the Balkans. The declarations place the Kingdom of Morocco on the same footing as the other troop contributing nations with regard to reciprocal waiver of claims arising out of the deployment of their forces.

War Disablement Pensions

Mr. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why people who enlisted in the armed services during the second world war and who worked in mining and other industries, known as the Bevin-Boys, are not eligible for war disablement pensions when suffering illness or disablement as a consequence of that service. [548]

Mr. Touhig: While Bevin Boys were called up and allotted National Service Registration Numbers, they were not enlisted or conscripted into HM Armed Forces. They remained civilians, mobilised to perform essential works. This being so, any illness or disablement suffered as a consequence would not have arisen as a direct result of enemy action and therefore would not fall for consideration as a war injury under the war pension scheme.

TRANSPORT

Trunk Road Closures (Compensation)

15. **Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce compensation payments for traders affected by trunk road closures. [435]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no plans to change the existing arrangements.

Climate Change

16. **Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to reduce the impact of transport on climate change. [436]

Dr. Ladyman: We published a summary of the main measures in the December 2004 consultation paper on the Review of the UK's Climate Change Programme. As part of the Review, we are considering the scope for additional measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from all sectors, including transport.

Free Bus Travel

17. **Hugh Bayley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of elderly and disabled people who will be entitled to free off-peak bus travel in 2006–07. [437]

Dr. Ladyman: From April 2006, people aged 60 and over and disabled people will be entitled to free off-peak travel on their local bus services in England. This will benefit around 11 million people.

Aviation Policy

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding aviation policy and its impact on climate change. [427]

Mr. Darling: My Department and Defra keep in regular contact on aviation and climate change issues.

Railways (Punctuality)

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on punctuality levels on the railways *(a)* in the most recent period for which figures are available and *(b)* in 1997. [438]

Derek Twigg: The moving annual average of the Public Performance Measure (PPM) for rail punctuality at 31 December 2004 was 82.8 per cent. For the year to March 1998 the moving annual average was 89.7 per cent.

Greater Manchester

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his plans for public transport in Greater Manchester. [439]

Dr. Ladyman: Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive is responsible for transport planning in Greater Manchester. They are required to submit their provisional five-year Local Transport Plan in July and final LTP in March 2006.

Aircraft Emissions

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans the Government have to tackle aircraft emissions. [451]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* The Government's plans to tackle aircraft emissions are set out in "The Future of Air Transport" White Paper (Cm 6046).

Airline Tickets (Financial Protection)

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Department has taken to publicise exclusions to airline ticket protection provided through credit card booking; and if he will bring forward legislation to improve financial protection for UK air travellers. [834]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has not publicised exclusions to airline ticket protection provided through credit card booking.

The Department has asked the Civil Aviation Authority to consider a range of options for the future financial protection of air travellers and will make a decision on receipt of further advice from the Authority.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the financial protection scheme for air travellers. [835]

Dr. Ladyman: The Air Travel Organisers' Licensing scheme (ATOL) provides financial protection for people buying package holidays. There is currently no statutory protection for people who buy air travel that is not part of a package.

The growth in popularity of no-frills air travel has meant the proportion of holidaymakers protected by the ATOL scheme has gone down. Together with the Civil Aviation Authority we are considering a range of options in relation to this decline.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the Civil Aviation Authority's estimate of the number of UK leisure passengers who flew without financial protection in 2004; if he will bring forward measures to address the gap in financial protection for air travellers; and if he will make a statement. [836]

Dr. Ladyman: In July 2004 the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) provided advice to the Government on the current financial protection arrangements for holidaymakers. In response, the Government asked the Authority to carry out further work on a range of options, including an assessment of the likely regulatory impacts. We will decide on next steps upon analysis of the CAA's further advice.

Civil Aviation Authority Study

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will publish his response to the Civil Aviation Authority fifth freedoms study. [181]

Ms Buck: The Civil Aviation Authority completed its consultation on this study on 13 May, and we expect that it will submit the final version of the study to the Department shortly. The response will follow in due course after we have carefully considered the content of the study.

Crossrail

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* priority and *(b)* funding his Department has committed to Crossrail. [433]

Derek Twigg: The Department attaches a very high priority to Crossrail. That is why we introduced a hybrid Bill for the project in February 2005, and reintroduced it on 18 May.

The Government remain equally committed to finding an equitable funding package for Crossrail. We will bring forward funding proposals during the passage of the Bill.

M1 Motorway

Mr. Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason the fencing being erected north of junction 11 alongside the southbound carriageways of the M1 motorway are not being set back to allow for future planned widening to take place. [179]

Dr. Ladyman: While the Government have announced their intention to widen the M1 in this area, the plans are still at an early stage, requiring land outside the current boundary.

The fencing at junction 11 is being erected inside the highway boundary to give the residents of Luton relief from severe noise problems. The construction of the fence allows the infill panel to be re-used at a later date, should the widening scheme proceed.

Motorbike Noise

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on maximum noise levels from motor-powered two-wheeled vehicles. [688]

Dr. Ladyman: Under the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 and the Motor Cycles etc. (EC Type Approval) Regulations 1999, motor powered two wheeled vehicles must be constructed to meet the following maximum noise levels (dB(A)) when subjected to a drive-by noise test.

Date of first use	*Mopeds*	*Motor cycles*
Pre 1 April 1983	No requirement	No requirement
1 April 1983 to 31 March 1991	74dB(A)	Up to 80cc = 79dB(A) [illegible]-125cc = 81dB(A) 126–350cc = 84dB(A) 351–500cc = 86dB(A) Over 500cc = 87dB(A)
1 April 1991 to 16 June 2003	75dB(A)	Up to 80cc = 78dB(A) 81–175cc = 80dB(A) Over 175cc = 83dB(A)
From 17 June 2003	Up to 25km/h = 66dB(A) Over 25km/h = 71dB(A)	Up to 80cc = 75dB(A) 81–175cc = 77dB(A) Over 175cc = 80dB(A)

Measures are also in place to ensure that these standards are maintained as far as possible in service by ensuring that inappropriate after-market/replacement silencers that would make motorcycles significantly noisier should not be sold or fitted and by enforcement of such measures at MOT, at the roadside and at point of sale.

New Road Routes

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list areas where studies are being undertaken on sites of *(a)* historical, *(b)* environmental and *(c)* archaeological importance that are being considered as possible new motorway and trunk road routes. [467]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* The Highways Agency undertakes environmental impact assessment studies for all proposed new motorway and all-purpose trunk road schemes. All sites of historical, environmental and archaeological importance that may be affected by route options will be subject to an appropriate level of assessment. The areas where these assessment studies are being undertaken are those associated with the Targeted Programme of Improvements listed at Appendix 5 in the Highways Agency's Business Plan 2005–06 which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Road Construction Costs

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average cost is of constructing a mile of *(a)* motorway and *(b)* trunk road. [464]

Dr. Ladyman: The average cost of building one mile of new *(a)* motorway: £23 million per mile *(b)* Dual lane carriageway: £12 million per mile. In considering the cost of a new road there is a vast array of variables, not least the difference between urban or rural areas, new route or existing network. Factors such as quality of land, site geology, drainage, environmental mitigation, traffic management or restricted access can all have a large impact on cost.

Road Tolls

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to introduce *(a)* further toll motorways and *(b)* tolls on other major roads. [450]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* Last summer's consultation exercise, "M6: giving motorists a choice" sought views on whether the Department should develop the option of an M6 Expressway between Birmingham and Manchester as an alternative to the current option to widen the M6 between junctions 11a and 19. The Government are considering the response to the consultation and will respond in due course.

The Government are introducing a Lorry Road User Charge (LRUC) to ensure that all hauliers, regardless of nationality, pay their fair share towards the costs they impose in the UK. Responsibility for implementing LRUC has been laid to HM Revenue and Customs.

In line with their manifesto commitment, the Government are examining the potential of moving away from the current system of motoring taxation towards a national system of road pricing.

CABINET OFFICE

E-government

24. **Miss Begg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will take steps to provide a single point for citizens to register change of details with all Government agencies through the e-government system. [445]

Mr. Murphy: The Cabinet Office offered an online 'change of address' service for Government some years ago. The service was not popular and was discontinued.

However much has changed in the way people use online services since then and the underlying principle that responsible citizens should only have to tell us changes once is a good one.

We shall explore that in the Cabinet Office led work on service delivery within the "Connecting the UK: the Digital Strategy" initiative announced in March.

E-democracy

25. **David Taylor:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what part the Strategy Unit has played in advancing e-democracy. [446]

Mr. Murphy: The Strategy Unit has not undertaken any work on e-democracy. The e-Government Unit in the Cabinet Office was taking this work forward, however, responsibility has now transferred to the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Better Regulation Task Force

26. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans he has for ensuring that the Better Regulation Task Force becomes more effective. [447]

Mr. Hutton: The Better Regulation Task Force is already an extremely effective champion of better regulation and we have made a commitment to build on this further.

We plan to put the Task Force on a permanent footing and give it additional responsibilities, including providing independent scrutiny of departmental plans for simplification, in becoming the Better Regulation Commission.

Civil Servants

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list civil servants seconded to European Union *(a)* institutions and *(b)* working committees, broken down by post occupied; and what the appointment criteria were in each case. [494]

Mr. Hutton: 118 UK civil servants are seconded to the European institutions as "Seconded National Experts" as at 23 May 2005. This figure is subject to change. The distribution of these secondees in the European Union is shown in the following table.

Selection by the institution is generally on the basis of presentation of a curriculum vitae for each candidate, usually followed by interviews, based on the requirements of each vacancy. UK Departments will submit details of only those civil servants whom they consider suitable for the posts and who will enhance their expertise during the secondment to the longer-term benefit of the Department or civil service as a whole.

At any time a further 10 to 14 UK civil servants are on short-term traineeships ("stages") to the European Commission. Other UK civil servants may visit the Commission for short-term work experience visits but these would not be centrally recorded.

The majority of UK staff who sit on Council or Commission working groups or management committees are serving UK civil servants, employed in the UK permanent representation to the European Union in Brussels or working in UK Departments and travelling to Brussels or Luxembourg for meetings.

Institution/area of work or Directorate-General	*Number of secondees*
European Commission	
DG Agriculture and Rural Development	2
DG Competition	5
DG Development	5
Humanitarian Aid Office	1
DG Economic and Financial Affairs	5
DG Education and Culture	2
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities	7
DG Transport and Energy	6
DG Enlargement	2
DG Enterprise and Energy	3
DG Environment	6
EuropeAid(Co-operation Office	4
Eurostat	3
DG External Relations	10
DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs	1
DG Health and Consumer Protection	8
DG Information Society and Media	1
DG Internal Market and Services	8
Joint Research Centre	2
DG Justice Freedom and Security	4
Legal Service	1
DG Personnel and Administration	1
DG Regional Policy	3
DG Research	3
DG Taxation and Customs Union	7
DG Trade	7
Secretariat General	1
European Commission total	108
Council of Ministers	
General Secretariat	1
Data Protection Secretariat	1
Private Office	1
External Economic Relations	1
CUEMC(Euro Military Staff Council Secretariat	1
Council of Ministers total	5
European Maritime Safety Agency	3
European Parliament/Budgetary Control Committee	1
European Parliament/Internal Policies	1
Overall total	118

Interchange Scheme

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assessment he has made of the operation of the Interchange scheme for providing broader work experience for local government staff. [80]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I have been asked to reply.

Interchange opportunities between staff in local and central Government are arranged by individual Departments.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister currently has 10 members of staff on secondment to local authorities and 26 local authority staff working in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on secondment in areas including Housing, Homelessness, Social Exclusion, Local Government Legislation, Urban Policy Unit, and Local Government Strategy Unit. Such opportunities provide useful development and training opportunities for individuals to develop new skills and new ways of working and for organisations to benefit from the exchange of new ideas and ways of working. An evaluation process is in place to assess the benefits of each secondment.

It is however for the local authorities to develop their own interchange policy and make decisions on the number of their staff they can release on secondments. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no input into these policies.

Ministerial Fleet

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many vehicles there are in the ministerial fleet, broken down by type; how many have a chauffeur; what greener fuel alternatives have been studied; and what the running costs of the fleet were in each of the last five years. [455]

Mr. Murphy: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive Mr. Roy Burke to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letters from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to *(a)* Mehwish Saeed, dated 7 March, *(b)* Mrs Z. Kanum, dated 3 March and *(c)* Mr. M R Sufi, dated 7 February. [190]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied to my right hon. Friend's letters with regard to Mehwish Saeed and Mrs. Z Kanum on 15 March and 14 March respectively.

My right hon. Friend will reply to my right hon. Friend's letter with regard to Mr. M R Sufi shortly.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 3 March with regard to the Manchester Muslim Funeral Committee. [194]

Dr. Howells: We have no record of having received this letter. UKvisas has requested a copy from the office of my right hon. Friend. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will reply to him as soon as possible, once a copy of the letter is received.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letters from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to *(a)* Mrs. K. Akhtar, dated 30 March, *(b)* Hina Khalid, dated 20 January and *(c)* Mr. T. Iqbal, dated 18 January. [195]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied to my right hon. Friend's letters on 14 April, 1 April and 6 April respectively.

Egypt

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to support the development of democratic elections in Egypt. [77]

Dr. Howells: We fully support the development of democratic elections in Egypt and welcome President Mubarak's proposal on 28 February to change the Egyptian constitution, with the stated aim of enabling direct election of the President from multiple candidates. On 12 May, the People's Assembly voted in favour of the amendment.

The UK, through our Embassy in Cairo, works closely with Egypt to promote political reform including, for example, through training on election reporting in the media. We are also encouraging the European Union to focus more on supporting democracy, governance and human rights in Egypt.

Guantanamo Bay

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the US authorities in relation to *(a)* prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay having access to people and texts appropriate to their faith and *(b)* the appropriate treatment of religious representatives and texts at Guantanamo Bay. [57]

Ian Pearson: We have expressed our concern to the US authorities about the conditions of detention at Guantanamo Bay on many occasions. British officials conducting welfare visits to the British detainees made inquiries about the detainees' freedom to practise their religion.

We understand that detainees are given copies of the Koran, prayer mats and Halal food, and that prayer calls are made throughout the camp.

India

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to visit India. [380]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary hopes to visit India again before long. As is normal practice, his next visit will not be announced until the dates for it are firm.

Lebanon

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what monitoring the UK has undertaken *(a)* directly and *(b)* through the UN of the impact of the withdrawal of Syrian forces from the Lebanon. [331]

Dr. Howells: Our Embassies in Beirut and Damascus are observing the extent and impact of the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon.

The UK has supported the decision of the United Nations Secretary General to deploy a UN mission made up of military experts to verify whether there has been a full and complete withdrawal of all Syrian troops and military assets and intelligence apparatus from Lebanon. We are pleased to have seconded a British Army Colonel to act as second-in-command of this mission. We understand that the mission will be producing its report later this month.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent Israeli attacks on Lebanese border villages. [332]

Dr. Howells: We are aware of a number of exchanges of fire on the Blue Line earlier this month. We understand that during these exchanges of fire, some Israeli artillery landed on the Lebanese side of the Blue Line, although Lebanese villages were not hit. On 13 May the Israeli Defence Force attacked Hizballah positions in southern Lebanon following a missile attack from Lebanon on the northern Israeli town of Shlomi and mortar and missile attacks on the area of Har Dov/Sheba'a Farms. We understand that the missile and mortar attacks were in response to Israeli overflights of Lebanese territory.

We are concerned about these infringements of the Blue Line and welcome the statements by the United Nations Secretary General on 10, 13 and 16 May expressing his own concern and calling for all parties to show restraint. We reiterate those sentiments and call on all parties to abide by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1310 and other relevant UN resolutions. In this sensitive political time in Lebanon it is irresponsible for any party to heighten tension along the Blue Line.

MI6 (Decision Notification)

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs under what circumstances MI6 may decide that major decisions it takes need not be communicated to him; and what mechanism exists to ensure such decisions are in the public interest. [509]

Mr. Straw: The Intelligence Services Act 1994 requires the explicit authority of the Secretary of State in respect of a wide range of major operations of the Secret Intelligence Service. There are therefore no circumstances in which major decisions by the Secret Intelligence Service would not be submitted to me or one of my Cabinet colleagues for approval, or of which I, or they, are not otherwise informed.

Nepal

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will make immediate funding available for the human rights monitoring commission referred to in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Nepal and the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights to start work. [833]

Dr. Howells: The UK attaches great importance to improving the human rights situation in Nepal. Our expenditure plan for the Financial Year 2005–06 includes an allocation of approximately £80,000 for the support of various human rights groups in Nepal and £75,000 on human rights training support. We were closely involved in efforts to secure Nepalese agreement to international human rights monitoring in Nepal under the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). We are keen in principle to offer financial support to the OHCHR office and are currently exploring suitable sources of funding.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of Sudan on behalf of Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam. [133]

Ian Pearson: Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, a prominent Sudanese human rights activist, was detained in Khartoum on 8 May along with two colleagues, Mr. Yasir Saleem and Mr. Abdallah Taha. Mr. Abdallah was released without charge on 11 May. Dr. Mudawi and Mr. Yasir were subsequently charged under articles 53 (Espionage against the Country) and 57 (Entering and Photographing Military Areas and Works). Mr. Yasir was released unharmed on 12 May. Dr. Mudawi was released unharmed on 17 May.

Our embassy in Khartoum raised this case with the acting Foreign Minister on 10 May and on 14 May. We also supported representations made by the local EU presidency on this matter.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will estimate how many deaths have occurred in Darfur in the last 18 months. [134]

Ian Pearson: Estimates of deaths in Darfur since the crisis began vary from 70,000 to 300,000 and above. Accurate figures are not available and better data are needed. The UK is funding the World Health Organisation to conduct a new mortality survey, and preliminary results are expected by mid-June. This will only give a snapshot of the situation; we have to accept that, given the complexities on the ground, we are unlikely ever to get a full picture of deaths from this conflict.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Sudan about the aerial bombardment of parts of Darfur. [135]

Ian Pearson: We have made regular representations to the Government of Sudan regarding aerial bombardment in Darfur. In early February the Government of Sudan announced that they would remove their Antonov aircraft from Darfur and refrain from hostile use of aircraft there. Both my right hon. Friends the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) pressed the Sudanese Minister for Foreign Affairs on this issue when they met on 10 February, and received the same assurances. The Antonovs appear to have been withdrawn. Although helicopter gunships remain in Darfur, the UN Secretary General has concluded in his monthly reports that there has been no further hostile use of aircraft since January.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what evidence he will make available to the International Criminal Court investigation into Darfur. [136]

Dr. Howells: At the request of the International Criminal Court (ICC), we currently share background material to help the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) become better attuned to the political situation in the region.

We are also negotiating with the OTP an agreement to allow the provision of any material that may be useful to investigative work.

The UK is fully committed to supporting the ICC and is engaged in dialogue with the Court at official level to consider ways of providing effective practical support.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to encourage the Sudanese Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement to attend peace talks about Darfur. [137]

Ian Pearson: We are in regular contact with both the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM—the political arm of the Sudanese Liberation Army) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and have consistently encouraged them to return to peace talks about Darfur. The SLM and JEM have now announced that they will attend a new round of peace talks with the Government. A recent regional Heads of State meeting on Darfur, held in Libya on 16–17 May, announced that the talks would restart in Abuja by the end of May. A UK representative will attend the talks and offer support to the African Union mediators.

Western Sahara

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Secretary-General of the UN on the replacement of the current head of MINURSO in the Western Sahara. [141]

Dr. Howells: The appointment of a successor for Alvaro de Soto, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara, is a matter for the Secretary-General alone. He has our full support in the nomination process.

Yemen

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to change travel advice relating to Yemen. [576]

Dr. Howells: We have no immediate plans to change the travel advice for Yemen. However, the advice, available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk, is kept under constant review. It is checked routinely and following any significant incident and, at a minimum, is revised and re-issued at least once every three months.

Zimbabwe

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to promote democracy in Zimbabwe. [310]

Ian Pearson: Our aim remains the early restoration of democratic governance, human rights and the rule of law to Zimbabwe.

We have worked with the international community to that end, isolating Mugabe and imposing sanctions, and will continue to support all those in Zimbabwe working for peaceful democratic change.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Border Inspection Posts

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the deletion of South Shields from designated border inspection posts under Commission Decision 2005/102/EC of OJ L33 of 5 February. [500]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

There was no border inspection post (BIP) at South Shields.

There was a BIP at North Shields (listed as Tyne-Northshields) which was removed from the list of approved BIPs by Commission Decision 2005/102/EC. Defra suspended the operation of the BIP at North Shields on 26 June 2003 as it did not comply with the requirements to operate under EU law. The operators elected not to invest further to bring it up to the required standard.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letters from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to *(a)* Mr. Hassan Nadir Rashid, dated 4 April and *(b)* Mr. H. Riaz, dated 7 April. [187]

Mr. Clarke: The information is as follows:

(a) I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 24 May 2005.

(b) I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 24 May 2005.

Mike Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department will reply to the letters sent on 17 December 2004 and 20 January 2005 concerning Mr. Salamat Khan, Home Office reference S774861/4. [883]

Mr. McNulty: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 23 May.

Hashem Adbul-Aziz Barwari

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Hashem Abdul-Aziz Barwari, reference B11 02376, will receive his clearance papers. [161]

Mr. McNulty: Mr. Barwari's application for further leave to remain has not yet been dealt with. The Immigration and Nationality Directorate will write to his representatives in due course to ask if he wishes to attend an interview or whether he wishes his application considered on the information already available.

Marriage Applications

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many marriage applications there have been in the UK in each year since 1997; [299]

(2) how many marriage applications there were in each register office in the UK in each month since May 1997. [300]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the Registrar General, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Davis, dated 24 May 2005:

As Registrar General for England and Wales I have been asked to reply to your recent parliamentary Questions on marriage applications. (299 and 300)

I am placing in the House of Commons Library a table showing the available information. It gives the numbers of intended marriages taken in each local authority in England and Wales for 1998–1999 to 2003–2004. Comparable data for Scotland and Northern Ireland are not held centrally, and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

From 1 January 2001, both the bride and groom had to give notice. Prior to then, couples who lived in the same registration district gave one notice. Figures exclude marriages in an Anglican Church where notice of marriage is given after banns.

Number of intended marriages taken in each local authority in England and Wales 1998–99 to 2003–04

Local authority	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Barking and Dagenham	720	737	872	1568	2,004	2,171
Barnet	1,578	1,560	1,820	3,580	3,809	4,055
Barnsley	858	852	1,097	1,678	1,721	1,752
Bath and North East Somerset	654	657	812	1,266	1,347	1,380
Bedfordshire	1,571	1,481	1,983	3,170	3,394	3,535
Bexley	920	933	1,156	1,814	1,938	2,007
Birmingham	3,721	3,615	4,291	7,201	8,098	7,861
Blackburn-with-Darwen	650	601	664	1,102	1,130	1,269
Blackpool	689	655	766	1,226	1,249	1,436
Blaenau	260	262	263	384	431	513
Bolton	1,094	1,109	1,266	2,108	2,287	2,390
Bournemouth	799	796	951	1,589	1,720	1,746
Bracknell Forest	505	431	597	911	1,024	1,078
Bradford	1,712	1,662	2,045	3,397	3,494	3,575
Brent	1,328	1,286	2,014	4,104	4,474	4,460
Bridgend	499	505	605	960	1,093	1,141
Brighton and Hove	1,134	1,054	1,630	2,687	2,611	2,865
Bristol	1,755	1,767	2,152	3,497	3,878	3,967
Bromley	1,255	1,320	1,422	2,383	2,621	2,607
Buckinghamshire	1,750	1,660	1,980	3,319	3,473	3,788
Bury	778	821	865	1,413	1,485	1,673
Caerphilly	675	702	803	1,281	1,391	1,451
Calderdale	765	758	858	1,399	1,497	1,605
Cambridgeshire	2,059	2,067	2,583	4,309	4,603	4,731
Camden	1,036	1,049	1,297	2,587	2,850	3,075
Cardiff	1,279	1,317	1,486	2,216	2,496	2,662
Carmarthenshire	607	616	630	1,064	1,190	1,138
Ceredigion	218	177	220	361	444	446
Cheshire	2,773	2,725	3,071	5,205	5,406	5,466
City of Westminster	883	975	1450	3,111	3,047	3,259
Conwy	416	388	470	777	755	822
Cornwall	1,837	1,907	2,376	3,802	4,071	4,307
Coventry	1,211	1,264	1,629	2,524	2,386	2,647
Croydon	1,469	1,408	1,766	3,194	3,328	3,522
Cumbria	1,602	1,626	1,966	3,245	3,341	3,570
Darlington	451	441	510	796	812	868
Denbighshire	287	307	332	560	605	626
Derby	1,097	1,063	1,203	2,008	1,896	2,037
Derbyshire	2,735	2,848	3,262	5,296	5,697	5,986
Devon	2,558	2,551	3,087	4,971	5,437	5,818
Doncaster	1,183	1,225	1,487	2,236	2,263	2,644
Dorset	1,345	1,360	1,631	2,625	2,749	3,101
Dudley	1,142	1,167	1,323	2,028	2,327	2,225
Durham	1,901	1,893	2,090	3,576	3,576	3,931
Ealing	1,601	1,540	2,098	3,878	3,923	4,155
East Riding of Yorkshire	1,007	1,012	1,290	2,030	2,160	2,422
East Sussex	1,925	1,987	2,411	4,061	4,324	4,257
Enfield	254	1,322	1,565	3,033	3,116	3,333
Essex	4,844	4,919	5,938	10,044	10,888	11,218
Flintshire	624	517	732	1,161	1,193	1,241
Gateshead	797	834	943	1,476	1,473	1,578
Gloucestershire	2,072	2,132	2,524	4,204	4,433	4,686
Greenwich	1,074	987	1,215	2,218	2,419	2,855

Number of intended marriages taken in each local authority in England and Wales 1998–99 to 2003–04

Local authority	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Gwynedd	388	360	427	673	716	748
Hackney	1,488	1,119	1,442	2,923	3,479	3,437
Halton	561	492	579	979	928	1,011
Hammersmith and Fulham	881	851	1,147	2,207	2,417	2,472
Hampshire	4,937	4,937	5,923	10,094	10,433	10,560
Haringey	1,422	1,408	2001	3,857	4,544	4,932
Harrow	871	907	1,040	1,873	2,072	2,005
Hartlepool	381	354	416	688	696	675
Havering	858	844	936	1,578	1,666	1,792
Herefordshire	600	552	678	1,084	1,130	1,221
Hertfordshire	4406	4,386	5,169	8,717	9,241	9,577
Hillingdon	1,043	1,075	1,272	2,190	2,079	2,233
Hounslow	1,062	1,102	1,528	2,550	2,803	2,878
Isle of Anglesey	200	226	254	367	461	385
Isle of Wight	501	498	591	924	1,086	1,051
Isles of Scilly	6	7	6	18	20	13
Islington	916	947	1,217	2,308	2,559	2,541
Kensington and Chelsea	731	674	970	1,887	1,931	1,933
Kent	4,934	4,874	6,017	9,498	10,516	11,206
Kingston Upon Hull	1,109	1,106	1,231	2,105	2,281	2,377
Kingston Upon Thames	710	680	859	1,327	1,380	1,546
Kirklees	1,556	1,576	1,937	3,097	3,195	3,343
Knowsley	531	546	605	881	886	1,009
Lambeth	1,611	1,606	2,232	4,299	4,883	1,836
Lancashire	4,404	4,583	5,185	8,329	8,922	9,527
Leeds	2,781	2,802	3,361	5,436	5,741	6,191
Leicester	1,245	1,169	1,604	2,791	2,808	2,864
Leicestershire	2,194	2,171	2,543	4,150	4,596	4,591
Lewisham	1,232	1,258	1,623	3,465	3,523	3,957
Lincolnshire	2,074	2,124	2,633	4,301	5,017	5,116
Liverpool	1,517	1,472	1,651	2,651	2,889	2,899
London Corporation	45	35	33	64	71	70
Luton	732	726	874	1,650	1,664	1,983
Manchester	1,679	1,608	2,015	3,273	3,616	4,001
Medway	1,197	1,108	1,512	2,032	2,508	2,508
Merthyr Tydfil	210	198	275	464	442	387
Merton	918	881	1,209	1,991	2,059	2,387
Middlesbrough	571	544	622	1,014	966	1,037
Milton Keynes	981	1,008	1,179	2,194	2,275	2,509
Monmouthshire	289	271	302	560	581	646
Neath Port Talbot	487	473	530	816	1,079	1,072
Newcastle Upon Tyne	1,056	1,011	1,207	1,852	1,970	2,025
Newham	1,297	1,262	1,569	3,139	3,498	3,401
Newport	530	529	576	945	1,124	1,129
Norfolk	2,988	3,058	3,637	6,284	6,476	6,750
North East Lincolnshire	637	614	707	1,148	1,281	1,296
North Lincolnshire	506	606	628	1,027	1,061	1,251
North Somerset	688	676	775	1,332	1,567	1,533
North Tyneside	843	852	1,084	1,445	1,704	1,837
North Yorkshire	2,033	2,179	2,443	4,047	4,429	4,329
Northamptonshire	2,738	2,184	3,318	5,340	5,941	6,273
Northumberland	1,177	1,152	1,347	1,997	2,170	2,368
Nottingham	1,117	1,146	1,355	2,255	2,447	2,593
Nottinghamshire	2,637	2,660	3,274	5,123	5,680	5,846
Oldham	822	790	965	1,479	1,641	1,618
Oxfordshire	2,403	2,259	3,094	5,114	5,407	5,733
Pembrokeshire	366	328	398	693	738	756
Peterborough	689	792	960	1,571	1,706	1,730
Plymouth	1,106	1,148	1,366	2,312	2,495	2,399
Poole	669	598	785	1,239	1,277	1,355
Portsmouth	960	984	1,142	1,974	2,153	2,201
Powys	363	345	377	634	710	794
Reading	739	756	936	1,607	1,769	1,819
Redbridge	1,148	1,132	1,294	2,417	2,327	2,497
Redcar and Cleveland	526	531	628	974	880	1,029
Rhonddacynontaf	837	791	940	1,539	1,562	1,751
Richmond upon Thames	806	822	1,028	1,783	1,881	1,894
Rochdale	864	845	933	1,488	1,570	1,763
Rotherham	892	857	1,033	1,589	1,781	1,947
Rutland	133	102	128	226	264	260
Salford	992	898	1,138	1,747	1,693	1,901
Sandwell	1,216	1,234	1,330	2,284	2,565	2,493
Sefton	1,071	987	1,133	1,725	1,837	1,952

Number of intended marriages taken in each local authority in England and Wales 1998–99 to 2003–04

Local authority	*1998–99*	*19 2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Sheffield	1,753	1,833	2,247	3,566	3,718	3,778
Shropshire	917	908	1,069	1,712	2,082	2,018
Slough	609	575	778	103	1,443	1,526
Solihull	679	700	728	1,100	1,182	1,344
Somerset	1,780	1,784	2,219	3,494	3,815	3,784
South Gloucestershire	1,032	974	1,223	1,957	2,020	2,239
South Tyneside	560	568	668	954	1,133	1,109
Southampton	997	983	1,312	2,023	2,213	2,190
Southend-on-Sea	801	792	864	1,537	1,621	1,702
Southwark	1,440	1,368	1,825	3,098	4,170	4,283
St. Helens	682	668	798	1,184	1,148	1,462
Staffordshire	2,910	2,943	3,451	5,577	6,063	6,419
Stockport	1,179	1,135	1,388	2037	2249	2337
Stockton-on-Tees	770	743	862	1,331	1,385	1,523
Stoke on Trent	1,091	1,021	1,154	1,820	2,097	2,155
Suffolk	2,748	2,587	3,035	5,060	5,365	5,851
Sunderland	995	1,101	1,248	1,880	2,054	2,199
Surrey	4,282	4,245	5,201	8,395	8,677	8,894
Sutton	883	876	1,098	1,599	1,707	1,715
Swansea	792	740	887	1,521	1,569	1,627
Swindon	869	890	1,146	1,670	1,839	1,988
Tameside	1,002	896	1,051	1,595	1,754	1,746
Telford and Wrekin	670	637	814	1,252	1,383	1,667
The Vale of Glamorgan	501	480	559	860	926	973
Thurrock	648	609	765	1,238	1,313	1,435
Torbay	536	591	768	1,058	1,221	1,271
Torfaen	371	341	390	726	648	658
Tower Hamlets	759	744	1,121	2,348	2,652	2,848
Trafford	951	904	1,070	1,729	1,760	1,897
Wakefield	1,260	1,285	1,625	2,444	2,721	2,904
Walsall	984	999	1,046	1,763	1,678	1,836
Waltham Forest	999	1,046	1,429	2,807	3,081	3,122
Wandsworth	1,502	1,513	2,151	3,813	4,145	4,553
Warrington	788	764	897	1,433	1,565	1,593
Warwickshire	1,944	2,007	2341	3807	3898	4148
West Berkshire	572	561	683	1,122	1,303	1,296
West Sussex	3,044	3,134	3,703	6,116	6,328	6,593
Wigan	1,245	1,297	1,437	2,314	2,365	2,637
Wiltshire	1,679	1,394	2026	3,361	3,593	3,597
Windsor and Maidenhead	565	543	713	1,131	1,174	1,196
Wirral	1,221	1,205	1,480	2,361	2,383	2,538
Wokingham	579	574	701	1,204	1,138	1,237
Wolverhampton	937	1,066	1,118	1,771	1,994	2,045
Worcestershire	2,049	2,011	1,987	3,701	4,277	4,193
Wrexham	437	468	505	896	805	908
York	856	766	956	1,590	1,649	1,697
Total	210,633	209,803	255,190	424,325	456,444	474,721

Visa Applications

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what stage the visa applications for *(a)* Bukola Fakeye, reference F1054346 and *(b)* Lucky Osadolor, reference B1127338 have reached; and if he will make a statement. [103]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 23 May 2005]*: The Home Office wrote to Miss Bukola Fakeye's legal representatives, Duncan Lewis and Co Solicitors, on the 19 May 2005 asking for additional evidence in order to assist them in reaching a final decision on Miss Fayeke's applications for indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom. The Home Office have asked that the evidence be submitted by 6 June 2005. It is therefore anticipated that the Home Office will be in a position to reach a final decision in this case by the end of June 2005.

Inquiries into Mr. Osadolor's case have been concluded and we will shortly be writing to his representatives to let him know the outcome.

HEALTH

Breast Cancer

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the results of trials published in *The Lancet* on detection rates for breast cancer by MRI scan and mammogram; and if her Department will take steps to ensure that all at-risk women under 50 are offered MRI scans. [882]

Ms Winterton: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on familial breast cancer was published in May 2004. NICE has committed to reviewing this guidance when the results of the magnetic resonance imaging for breast screening (MARIBS) and other magnetic resonance imaging studies become available.

NICE's clinical guidelines bring clarity to complex areas of diagnosis and care by providing recommendations for good practice that are based on the best available evidence of clinical and cost effectiveness. Clinicians are expected to take full account of these guidelines.

Dental Services

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department has taken to *(a)* retain and *(b)* recruit dental practitioners who register new NHS patients in the constituency of Leeds, north-west; and if she will make a statement. [378]

Mr. Byrne: Leeds north-west primary care trust (PCT) has received £96,000 capital funding, which is being utilised through the PCTs dental incentive scheme, to ensure that the current level of commitment of local dentists to the national health service is maintained. This funding supports general dental practitioners in ensuring patient safety and improving practice premises, in particular replacing dental chairs with modern equipment.

A further £42,000 revenue funding has been received by the PCT, which will be partly utilised to provide three extra NHS dental sessions a week, enabling an additional 12 patients a week to receive treatment. This locality-based access scheme will provide urgent and routine treatment sessions for non-registered NHS patients in the area.

In April 2005, the PCT had six general dental practices working under personal dental services (PDS) arrangements. These practices have successfully secured an additional £221,000 to increase the workforce, benefiting an additional 1,355 new patients and enabling the re-registration of approximately 2,500 NHS patients.

The PCT took part in the recent West Yorkshire international dental recruitment campaign and successfully supported a local practice to recruit a Polish dentist commencing in August 2005. The PCT is also working with local general dental practitioners to explore other avenues of recruitment to existing vacancies.

Drug Addicts

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many drug addicts were being treated by GPs in *(a)* Bassetlaw and *(b)* England on the latest date for which figures are available. [6]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* Information on the number being treated in Bassetlaw is not available centrally.

The numbers in drug treatment in England in 2003–04, the latest year for which published figures are available, was 154,000.

Food Poisoning

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were recorded as suffering from food poisoning in each of the last five years; what the main causes were; and if she will make a statement. [691]

Caroline Flint: The number of notified cases of food poisoning in England and Wales reported to the Health Protection Agency (HPA) each year since 2000 is shown in table one. Total notifications have shown a decrease since 2000.

Table 1: Annual corrected food poisoning notifications, England and Wales 2000–04[1]

	Formally notified	*Otherwise ascertained*[2]	*Total*
2000	46,481	40,047	86,528
2001	46,768	38,700	85,468
2002	38,541	34,108	72,649
2003	35,211	35,821	71,032
2004[1]	34,070	36,379	70,449
Total	201,071	185,055	386,126

[1] Provisional data

[2] Includes port health authorities

Source:

Health Protection Agency.

The main causes of food poisoning are often unknown, as food poisoning is a diagnosis based on clinical suspicion rather than laboratory confirmation. Notified cases of food poisoning are not considered to be a reliable indicator of food-borne disease due to considerable under-reporting. Very few notified cases will be based on evidence supporting a suspected association with food.

The HPA has estimated that, in 2000, there may have been as many as 1.3 million cases of food-borne disease acquired in England and Wales, of which around 370,000 consulted a doctor. In that year, only 86,528 cases of food poisoning were notified.

Recent research undertaken by the HPA suggests that *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* are the major causes of food-borne disease in England and Wales[1]. The annual totals for UK-acquired laboratory-confirmed cases of these pathogens in England and Wales are shown in table two.

[1] GK Adak, SM Long, SJ O'Brien—Trends in indigenous food-borne disease and deaths in England and Wales1992–2000. *Gut* 2002, 51: 832–841.

Table 2: Number of laboratory-confirmed cases of UK-acquired Campylobacter and Salmonella infection; England and Wales 2000–04[1]

	Campylobacter[2]	*Salmonella*[2]
2000	43,815	11,500
2001	44,368	12,951
2002	37,316	11,691
2003	36,204	12,245
2004[1]	33,384	10,551
Total	195,087	58,938

[1] Provisional data.

[2] Faecal and lower gastrointestinal tract isolates.

Source:

Health Protection Agency.

Final figures for 2003 show a 17 per cent. decrease in the number of laboratory-confirmed cases of *Campylobacter* infection compared with figures for 2000. Data for 2004 suggest a further decrease but these figures are provisional and may be subject to change during the course of 2005. The number of laboratory-confirmed cases of *Salmonella* infection in 2003 remain virtually unchanged compared with the figure for 2000.

Provisional data for 2004 suggest a decrease in laboratory-confirmed cases of *Salmonella* in England and Wales. These declines in laboratory-confirmed cases of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* are also reflected in food poisoning notifications, which show a 19 per cent. decrease over the same time-period (2000–04).

Food Supplements Directive

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the recent reasoned opinion of Advocate General Geelhoed that the Food Supplements Directive is invalid under EU law. [319]

Caroline Flint: The Advocate General's opinion concluded that the Food Supplements Directive 2002/46/EC is invalid on the grounds that it infringes the principle of proportionality because basic principles of Community law, such as the requirements of legal protection, of legal certainty and of sound administration have not been properly taken into account. This opinion is not binding in the European Union. The European Court of Justice will make the final decision regarding the invalidity of the Directive.

Fuel Emissions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will estimate the cost to the national health service of providing treatment to patients suffering illnesses provoked partly or wholly by emissions from fuel products in the last financial year for which figures are available. [91]

Caroline Flint: This information is not collected directly as it is not possible to identify individual patients affected by air pollution. The link between air pollution and hospital admissions is derived from statistical correlations between daily air pollution levels and routine daily statistics on total respiratory hospital admissions. The national health service costs given as follows should be regarded only as rough estimates based on average figures.

The Department's committee on the medical effects of air pollutants (COMEAP) estimated in 1998[1] that there were 10,500 respiratory hospital admissions (additional or brought forward) per year due to PM_{10} (PM_{10} refers to the mass of particles less than 10 μm in diameter per cubic metre of air) in urban areas of Great Britain. The equivalent estimate for sulphur dioxide (SO_2) was 3,500 respiratory hospital admissions.

Assuming that two thirds of the PM_{10}[2] and the vast majority of SO_2 in urban areas is due directly or indirectly to fuel emissions from transport or from industry, as a rough estimate it can be assumed that up to around 10,500 respiratory hospital admissions in urban areas of Great Britain may be related to emissions from fuel products.

The Department's ad-hoc group on the economic appraisal of the health effects of air pollution estimated in 1999 that the average cost of an emergency respiratory hospital admission was around £1,400. This gives a rough estimate of NHS costs due to emissions from fuel products of up to £14.7 million (£17.3 million in 2004 prices). This is an upper bound assuming that all respiratory hospital admissions are additional rather than simply brought forward as a result of higher air pollution days. The estimate does not include respiratory hospital admissions due to ozone[3] as an estimate of the proportion of ozone formed from fuel product precursors was not easily available. The estimate also does not include NHS costs of cardiovascular hospital admissions due to PM_{10} or NHS costs of exacerbations of respiratory symptoms due to SO_2 or PM_{10}.

Further work on this issue may be considered as part of the work of the new COMEAP sub-group on quantification.

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[1] Based on pollution levels in 1995–96. Pollution levels have reduced substantially since then.

[2] This includes PM_{10} derived from transport, from industry and from Europe (itself mainly derived from transport and industry). It excludes the coarse fraction of PM_{10} (mainly coarse dust and sea salt).

[3] The estimate also excludes hospital admissions due to nitrogen dioxide to avoid double counting with PM_{10}.

Heatwave Plan

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether additional resources will be provided to *(a)* primary care trusts and *(b)* other NHS organisations when levels (i) 1, (ii) 2, (iii) 3 and (iv) 4 of the Heatwave Plan for England are reached; [251]

(2) To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the resource requirements necessary to implement the Heatwave Plan for England. [256]

Caroline Flint: The assessment has included an assessment of the adequacy of existing resources to do all that is necessary to implement levels 1 and 2 without diverting them from existing commitments. The resources required to implement levels 3 and 4 are a function of the length, severity and geographical spread of a heat wave.

There will be no additional resources made available from central departmental budgets for implementation of any level of the Heatwave Plan for England, apart from those already identified to print and distribute copies of the advice leaflets and secure proper surveillance from the Meteorological Office, NHS Direct and the Health Protection Agency. Many of the actions required at level 1 and 2 are being taken anyway as part of normal care, and all of them can reasonably be thought of as essential contributions to emergency planning required by 'duty of care'.

National health service organisations and local authorities are expected to include in their financial planning the need to fund contingencies, of which costs associated with levels 3 and 4 of the Heatwave Plan are an example, along with those arising from, for example, widespread flooding.

Mobile Roadside Cafes

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the application to mobile roadside cafés of *(a)* smoking and *(b)* health and safety regulations relating to food preparation. [468]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* All mobile roadside cafés in which food is prepared must meet the requirements of the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995. Local authority environmental health officers will inspect these vehicles to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Regulations. Guidance on compliance with these requirements indicates that smoking in food handling areas is strictly prohibited.

Overseas Nurses

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many foreign nurses were employed in the NHS in Lancashire *(a)* in 1997, *(b)* in 2001 and *(c)* on the latest date for which figures are available; and what percentage of the total those numbers represents in each case. [652]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect information on the country of origin of nurses recruited to the national health service.

TREASURY

Bank Charges

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will commission research into the *(a)* reasons for and *(b)* level of unavoidable miscellaneous charges made by banks, with particular reference to (i) survey fees, (ii) booking fees, (iii) arrangement fees, (iv) higher lending charge fees and (v) sealing of deeds fees; and if he will make a statement. [298]

Mr. Lewis: As my hon. Friend, the former Financial Secretary (Stephen Timms), said in his answer on 18 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 479W, the Government have no plans to commission research into miscellaneous charges made by banks. However, following the Cruickshank Report, in pre-Budget report 2003 the Government asked the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to take on an enhanced role in relation to payment systems for a period of four years. The OFT have established the Payment Systems Task Force, which is working to resolve competition, efficiency and incentive issues relating to payment systems. The Taskforce has recently agreed that a faster payments service be introduced for telephone banking, internet banking and standing order payments, and plans to examine a number of other topics including cheques, price efficiency and access and governance of the UK's major payment schemes.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letters from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to *(a)* Mr. and Mrs. Tiplady dated 4 April and *(b)* Mr. J. H. Edwards dated 1 March. [71]

John Healey: I replied to the right hon. Gentleman's letter concerning Mr. Edwards on 5 April and my right hon. Friend the Paymaster General will be writing to him shortly about the case of Mr. and Mrs. Tiplady.

Death Certification

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what circumstances deaths may be certified by persons who are not medically qualified; and what arrangements are made for the clinical audit of such certification, including stated cause of death. [66]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the Registrar General, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tim Boswell, dated 24 May 2005:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking in what circumstances deaths may be certified by persons who are not medically qualified; and what arrangements are made for the clinical audit of such certification, including stated cause of death. (66)

Before a death can be registered in England and Wales, the cause must be certified by a doctor who attended the deceased during his or her last illness, or by a coroner. Coroners need not be medically qualified. They are required to be qualified either as doctors or as lawyers: most hold legal qualifications and some have both.

Deaths must be referred to the coroner if:

The cause of death is unknown

The death was violent, or unnatural or there are suspicious circumstances

The death 'may' be due to:

- accident
- suicide
- self-neglect
- neglect by others
- industrial disease, or the deceased's employment

The death occurred during

- an operation, or before full recovery from an anaesthetic
- detention in police or prison custody, or shortly after release

There is no doctor who attended the deceased available to complete the MCCD

The deceased was not seen by the certifying doctor either after death or within 14 days before death

Once a death has been referred, it is the responsibility of the coroner to decide what investigation is required. Coroners can only certify the cause of death for the purposes of registration if they have had a post mortem performed by a pathologist, or held an inquest, or both.

There are no routine arrangements for clinical audit of the work of coroners.

Euro

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will next publish his assessment of the five economic tests for the UK to join the euro. [326]

Mr. Lewis: Government policy on membership of the single currency is unchanged. It remains as set out by the Chancellor in his statement to the House of Commons in October 1997, and again in the Chancellor's statement of the Five Tests assessment in June 2003.

Budget 2005 noted that the Government did not propose a euro assessment be initiated at the time of the Budget and that the Treasury will again review the situation at Budget time next year, as required by the Chancellor's June 2003 statement.

MRSA

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in the UK have died of MRSA in NHS hospitals since 2001. [312]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Andrew Rosindell, dated 24 May 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many people in the UK have died from MRSA in NHS hospitals since 2001. (312)

Special analysis of MRSA deaths are undertaken by the Office for National Statistics and are published annually in Health Statistics Quarterly. These are for England and Wales only. The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. Numbers of deaths where MRSA was a contributory factor in NHS general hospitals within England and Wales are given in the table below.

Number of deaths in NHS general hospitals where MRSA was a contributory factor,[1] England and Wales, 2001–03[2]

	Number of deaths
2001	649
2002	720
2003	855

[1] Identified using the methodology described in Griffiths C, Lamagni TL, Crowcroft NS, Duckworth G and Rooney C (2004) Trends in MRSA in England and Wales: analysis of morbidity and mortality data for 1993–2002. Health Statistics Quarterly 21, 15–22.

[2] Figures are for deaths occurring in the years 2001 to 2003.

Source:

Office for National Statistics

Tax Credit Overpayments

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of overpayment of tax credits involving Bassetlaw constituents are unresolved. [49]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available, but statistics on overpayments will be published on 1 June 2005 under National Statistics.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many recipients in Stroud constituency have been identified as having received over-payments of tax credits; and how many of these over-payments are due to computer software problems. [73]

Dawn Primarolo: Statistics on overpayments will be published on 1 June 2005 under National Statistics. A breakdown of the causes of those over-payments is not available.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the highest level of over-payment of tax credit is; and what arrangements have been put in place to recoup such over-payments without breaching Government guidelines of not putting families into hardship. [74]

Dawn Primarolo: Information requested is not available.

The Inland Revenue's approach to handling over-payments is set out in their Code of Practice 26 "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?"

VAT

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will reduce the rate of VAT charged on audio books. [84]

Mr. Lewis: Under agreements with our European partners that govern the VAT system, we can apply a reduced VAT rate of no lower than 5 per cent. on goods and services from within a prescribed list in the Sixth VAT Directive (Annex H). There is no provision in this list for a reduced rate of VAT on audio books.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions the Government *(a)* has had, *(b)* is having and *(c)* is scheduled to have with (i) the European Commission and (ii) members and representatives of EU member state Governments on adjusting VAT ratings on particular goods and services; if he will list the (A) goods and (B) services under discussion; who initiated each discussion; and if he will make a statement. [322]

Mr. Lewis: The Government holds discussions with the European Commission and other EU member states on many issues, including reduced rates of VAT.

The Commission's review of reduced rates was adopted on 23 July 2003. Since then, a range of goods and services has been discussed, such as restaurant services, compact discs, repairs to listed places of worship, energy-saving materials for do-it-yourself installation, energy-saving products, memorials, and the labour-intensive services listed in Annex K of the Sixth VAT Directive (small repairs, house repairs, window cleaning, cleaning in private households, domestic care services, and hairdressing).

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Electoral Registration

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Government plans to require some form of identification to be shown in order to vote at a polling station. [28]

Harriet Harman: The Government currently have no plans to require a form of identification to be shown in order to vote at a polling station, but we will consider the issue along with discussion of improvements to postal voting security.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will seek to amend the law relating to electoral registration to require individual registration. [82]

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the Government's policy is on extending the use of individual electoral registration from Northern Ireland to other parts of the United Kingdom. [27]

Harriet Harman: The Government's view on voter registration, expressed in our response to the Electoral Commission's Voting for Change report, is that while we are sympathetic to the principles of individual registration and recognise its potential benefits, we are concerned to maintain a straightforward system and comprehensive electoral registers.

Our preferred solution is to collect the additional individual identifiers recommended by the Electoral Commission (signature and date of birth), but to do so through an adapted household form. We believe that this system will improve security in the same way as individual registration, but will reduce the risk of falling levels of registration.

We are currently discussing this proposal with electoral administrators, the political parties and other stakeholders. If a decision is made to take this policy forward, we intend to do so through an Electoral Administration Bill, when parliamentary time allows.

Freedom of Information

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many and what proportions of *(a)* requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 from (i) journalists, (ii) Members of Parliament and (iii) others and *(b)* written parliamentary questions tabled since 1 January 2005 have been referred to the Central Clearing House. [123]

Harriet Harman: Since the Freedom of Information Act is requestor blind, there is no way to provide exact figures relating to the number of requests that have been referred to the Clearing House from either journalists or Members of Parliament. However, we estimate that, through self-identification of media requestors, that of the nearly 2000 cases referred to date, approximately 830 (42 per cent.) of requests have come from journalists and 130 (7 per cent.) have been from Members of Parliament.

As written parliamentary questions are not counted as requests for information within the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, these are not referred to the Clearing House for advice. Departments are instead expected to seek guidance from their parliamentary branches as normal.

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the budget of the Central Clearing House is; how many officials work there; on what date it was established; by whom; and to whom it is responsible. [124]

Harriet Harman: The Clearing House was established in September of 2004. It is part of the Information Rights Division in the Constitution Directorate of Department of Constitutional Affairs and is ultimately responsible to the Permanent Secretary, Alex Allan. There are currently 12 posts within the Clearing House, two of which are directly funded by Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to provide expertise on the environmental information regulations.

The implementation costs of the Clearing House totalled approximately £196,000, while its current operational cost and budget which includes IT, staffing costs including those posts funded by DEFRA and maintenance of the central monitoring system, currently stands at £511,404 per annum.

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will place in the Library a copy of the *(a)* terms of reference and *(b)* mission statement for the Central Clearing House. [125]

Harriet Harman: The Clearing House does not have an individual mission statement, however it sits within the Information Rights Division, part of the Constitution Directorate in Department for Constitutional Affairs. Its role is to offer advice and assistance to Whitehall Departments in dealing with information requests made under the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and the Environmental Information Regulations. It has responsibility for those requests which are particularly complex or have cross Government implications and to ensure a consistent and appropriate approach is taken in the application of the legislation.

Its terms of reference are further defined in the Clearing House toolkit, a document produced for departmental FOI practitioners. This document is currently being revised to reflect experience over the period since the FOIA came into force. However, once this revision is complete, we will be placing copies on the DCA website, which is expected by the early summer.

Michael Connarty: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many inquiries have been made to Government Departments under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and what estimate has been made of the number which have been refused. [442]

Harriet Harman: We are committed to publishing a quarterly bulletin on the performance of Central Government under Freedom of Information and this will include details on the numbers of requests and rates of refusal. The information for the first bulletin is currently being validated for publication next month.

However, in a recent trial of this monitoring system with 27 Central Government Departments and Agencies, including all Departments of State, we collected information on those requests received in the month of January. This indicated that, in the first month of implementation, 4,462 requests were received by those monitored of which only 484, or 14 per cent., of those processed were refused in full.

Judicial Appointments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many judicial appointments the Lord Chancellor has made since 1 March; and whom he has appointed. [389]

Harriet Harman: The Lord Chancellor has made 449 judicial appointments since 1 March 2005. A table detailing the names of those appointed, and the posts to which they were appointed to, has been placed in the Library of both Houses.

Lay Magistrates

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people applied to become lay magistrates between 1997 and 2001; and how many were accepted. [293]

Harriet Harman: The information can be found in the following table.

	Number of applicants	*Number appointed*
Calendar year		
1997	—	1,573
1998	—	1,609
1999	—	1,743
Financial year		
2001	5,320	1,618

Records of the number of people who applied to become a magistrate were not collected centrally prior to 2001.

Figures for the number of people who were appointed in 2000 are not available. Collection of figures in 2000 changed from the calendar year to the financial year, no figures were published because of the three month gap January to March 2000.

David Davis: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the budgeted departmental expenditure is for legal aid in asylum and immigration cases for 2005–06. [305]

Bridget Prentice: The budgeted expenditure for 2005–06 is £98 million.

Lord Chief Justice

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she will announce the name of the next Lord Chief Justice. [390]

Harriet Harman: There is currently no vacancy in the Office of Lord Chief Justice. If in the future a vacancy does occur, the procedure will be that my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor will advise the Prime Minister, who will make a recommendation to Her Majesty. Once the Queen has approved the appointment, it will be announced by the Prime Minister's Office.

Postal Votes

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Government plans to hold an inquiry into the use of postal votes during the 2005 general election. [340]

Harriet Harman: The Electoral Commission, under Section 5 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, has a statutory duty to report on the administration of all parliamentary general elections. We would expect their report on the 2005 general election to include analysis of the administration of postal voting, as was the case with their report on the 2001 general election.

Additionally, information about postal votes at the 2005 general election will be included in The Electoral Commission's report on participation and turnout, to be released later in the summer.

The Government currently have no plans for a separate inquiry into postal voting, but they will be discussing proposals for improvements to security with stakeholders.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discussions her Department has had with electoral returning officers on *(a)* electoral fraud and *(b)* administrative errors involving postal votes. [343]

Harriet Harman: Throughout the general election period, we held daily discussions with representatives of electoral returning officers about the progress of the elections. An advisory board for the general election was set up in October 2004 to discuss the running of the general election.

Members of the group included electoral administrators and we will be holding an evaluation meeting to discuss the recent election, including the experience of postal voting. We have also arranged a number of meetings with electoral administrators to discuss the postal voting security measures announced after the general election.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the petitions made to Election Commissioners concerning allegations of electoral fraud involving postal votes since 1997; and what the findings of the Election Commissioners were in each case. [412]

Harriet Harman: A list of all petitions issued since 1997 in parliamentary, European and municipal elections is as follows. Those petitions that are recorded as "lapsed" are due to non payment of security for costs and as a result are not commonly in the public domain.

There have been a total of 37 election petitions issued since 1997:

Four parliamentary,

One European and

32 municipal.

High Court judges, will hear trials involving a parliamentary or European petition.

They may assign a municipal petition to be heard by a Commissioner.

As the table of petitions indicates, there have been only two trials before a Commissioner (in the Aston and Bordesley Green Wards, Birmingham city council).

Details of petitions are entered into two separate registers. These registers do not contain sufficient information to state which petitions specifically related to allegations of electoral fraud involving postal votes in every case.

The brief grounds and results of petitions have been indicated in the following table.

Date	*Location*	*Petitioner/s*	*Respondent/s*	*Grounds*	*Result*
Parliamentary 14 May1997	Dagenham	Richard Henry Dawson	Jack Thomas	R/O negligent in that he accepted nominations from non-electors etc.	Lapsed
15 May 1997	Winchester	Gerald Malone	Mark Oaten, Lindsey Garrett Fox	Quality of ballot papers rejected for want of official mark and rejected ballot papers disputed	Special case 6 October 1997. Petition allowed
22 May1997	North East Bedfordshire	Ashley Leggett	Sir Nicholas Walter Lyell QC, George Coates	Sir Nicholas Walter Lyell formerly Peter Rubery Hayward prevented from standing as a candidate by interim injunction obtained by Sir Nicholas Walter Lyell QC	Lapsed
10 August 2001	Romford	Peter Brian Thorogood	Andrew Rosindell	Offences contrary to s 113 (i) and (2)*(b)*of RPA1983 (no details given)	Lapsed
European 14 June 2004	Eastern England	John James Naisbitt	David Monks	Various	Struck out 30 July 2004
Local government 15 September 1997	Pakenham Ward of St. Edmundsbury	Lisa Francis Couper	Lynn Aisbett, Valerie Ann White	Votes cast for petition wrongly recorded by R/O	Special case 17 October 1997. Petition allowed. Second respondent not duly elected. Petitioner should have been declared duly elected.
6 May 1999	Daneside Ward of Seaham town council	Steven Paul Colbon	Geraldine Bleasdale, John Henry Bleasdale, James Dickinson Edwards, Toni Robson, Marion Florence Wood, James Sheenin	Nomination rejected as invalid	Special case 30 July 1999 Petition dismissed. Issued out of time
26 May 1999	Selby central ward, Selby district council	Wendy Ruth Nicholls	Melanie Ann Davis, Richard Kenneth Fogden, Martin Connor	Votes incorrectly counted	Special case 30 July 1999. Petition allowed. Election valid. Second respondent not elected. Petitioner elected
26 May 1999	Creneswater ward of Southsea parish council	Simon James Cattermole	Nicola Vanessa Bentley, Rubayat Rahman Choud, David Heaven, Roger James, Nick Gurney	Votes incorrectly counted	Special case 30 July 1999 Petition allowed. Election valid. Fourth respondent not elected. Petitioner elected.
27 May 1999	Longfield ward of Dartford borough council	Alistair Samuel Jordan	Robert John Dunn, Albert Raymond Bassum, Jeremy Alan Kite, Christopher Shepherd	Candidate disqualified for standing(did not occupy property within area for whole of previous 12 months	Lapsed
27 May 1999	Aston ward, Birmingham district council	Gabra Miah	Ahmed Iftikhar	1. Illegal practice, respondent published false statements about petition. 2. Corrupt practice, third party included unauthorised election expenses. 3. Invalid nomination of fellow candidate	11 November 1999 Commissioner application to dismiss by respondent. Allowed. Petition dismissed. Trial date vacated.
27 May 1999	Parish of Baileston	Ruth Marjorie Dickson	Robert Charles Bailey and ors	Votes incorrectly counted	Special case 15 December 1999. Petition allowed. Election valid. Fifteenth respondent not elected. Tenth respondent elected.
27 May 1999	Rossington West ward of Rossington parish council	Barry Johnson	Nicholas Dobson, Doreen Appleby and ors	Votes incorrectly counted	Special case 30 July 1999. Petition allowed. Election valid. Second respondent not elected. Petitioner elected.

Date	*Location*	*Petitioner/s*	*Respondent/s*	*Grounds*	*Result*
25 May 1999	Haughton East	Leslie Upton	David Lynotte and 8 ors	Undue influence impeding free exercise of franchise by use of Cabinet Minister and ors officials to influence voters	Lapsed
20 April 2000	South East ward of Knighton town council in Powys	Janice Geraldine Harris	Angus John Gilmore, Jackie Tonge	Votes incorrectly counted (some not counted)	Special case 11 December 2000. Petition allowed. Election valid. First respondent not elected. Petitioner elected.
20 May 2000	Parish of Bracknell ward of Bracknell town council	Walter Alfred Thompson	Susan Margaret Thompson, Gordon Mitchell	Votes incorrectly counted	Special case 25 July 2000. Petition allowed. Election valid. First respondent not elected. Petitioner elected.
25 May 2000	Sparkhill ward of Birmingham city council	Emily Cox, Amen Ellachi, Akhlag Ahmed, Tony King.	Jagdip Rai and chief executive of Birmingham city council	Personation, error, treating, bribery, undue influence overspending election expenses	25 July 2000 Application to strike out on grounds of late service of petition. Dismissed
25 May 2000	Nicholls ward, Birmingham city council	Abdul Malik	Mohammed Mansoor and Returning Officer	Voters abroad shown as having voted	Lapsed
27 June 2001	South Ribble North-West electoral division of Lancashire county council	Peter Terence Wakeling	Anthony Edward Pimblett, Max Winterbottom	Ballot papers for another electoral division handed out to some voters in error.	Special case 5 October 2001. Petition allowed. Election void. First respondent not duly elected.
27 June 2001	Ellogen North electoral division, Redruth, Cornwall	Terence Alan Rowe	Paul Thomas Holmes, Geoffrey Gordon Cox, Adam John Beer, Noel Hutchinson	2 votes included wrongly	Special case 18 December 2001 Petition allowed. Election void. First respondent not duly elected.
22 May 2002	Sands End ward of London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	Colin George Pavelin	Richard Harbord, Stephen James Hamiiton	Ballot papers rejected for want of official mark affected result	Special case 31 July 2002. Petition allowed. Election void. Second respondent not duly elected.
23 May 2002	Aston ward, city of Birmingham	Nain Ahmed	Anthony Paul Kennedy, Stewart Dobson	Successful candidate made false statements about petitions for purpose of affecting the result and/or alleged irregularities regarding opening of postal votes	4 October 2002 Petition struck out against second respondent 11 October 2002 Petition struck out against first respondent
23 May 2002	Little Horton ward of Bradford metropolitan borough council	Jamshed Khan	Taj Mubarik Salam, Ian J Stewart	Error in counting votes	29 November 2002 Petition dismissed.
23 May 2002	Cheetham ward, city of Manchester	Habib Ullah, Mohammed Sabir, Basten Ahmed Misbah Begum	Martin Donald Pagel, Andrew Scallen	Requests for proxy votes ignored, personation, delay in taking ballot box to council, comments by first respondent during campaign.	11 October 2002 Petition struck out.
23 May 2002	Peckham ward, London borough of Southwark	Mike Jinnah Rahman, Annette Pallas, Natalie Ajeon	Barrie John Hargrove, William Kayada, Tayo Adelane Situ	Marked register missing, Ballot box late arriving at court, count started before candidates arrived, voters removed from register, confusion over postal votes	29 November 2002 Petition dismissed with consent of first petitioner on behalf of co petitioners.
21 May 2003	Belle Vale and Hasbury ward, metropolitan borough of Dudley	Martin Christopher Knight	Jill Cheryl Nicholls, Andrew Sparke	Failure by R/O to ensure issued ballot papers were delivered in accordance with Part V of Rep of People Regulations 2001	19 December 2003 petition dismissed

Date	*Location*	*Petitioner/s*	*Respondent/s*	*Grounds*	*Result*
21 May 2003	St. Helens borough council in the parish of Sereley Green	Sandra Cleary	Joan Davies, Peter Blackburn	Votes miscounted	Special case 17 October 2003 Election void, Joan Davies not duly elected.
21 May 2003	College ward of Wansbeck district council	James Sawyer	Michael Raymond Kirkup, Robert Stephenson	Votes miscounted block of votes wrongly allocated to candidates	Special case 17 October 2003 Election void, first respondent not duly elected. Petitioner duly elected.
21 May 2003	Broughton and Appleby ward, North Lincolnshire district council	Kenneth Anthony Edgell	Ivan Glover, Michael Garnett	Ballot papers in respect of postal voter wrongly counted(did not bear signature and authentication of voter	4 November 2003 Petition granted. Election void. Ivan Glover not duly elected
23 May 2003	Hartley parish council	Trevor Royston Modell	Christopher Alford	False statements against petitioner issued by respondent calculated to affect petitioners prospects of being re-elected	Lapsed
28 May 2003	Lightwater ward, borough of Surrey-Heath	Lindsey Fellows	Malcolm Bell, Dorothy Drummond, Peter Edward, Harper, Alan Clevely, Mr. Ghandum	Election circulation delivered by Royal Mail to constituents in contravention of RP Act	31 July 2003 Permission to withdraw granted
28 May 2003	Windlesham parish council(Lightwater ward	Lindsey Fellows	Surinder Ghandum, Alan Clevely	Election circulation delivered by Royal Mail to constituents in contravention of RP Act	31 July 2003 Permission to withdraw granted
23 June 2004	Aston ward, Birmingham city council	Ayaz Iqbal, Nagmen Mir, Qadeer Ahmed, Naser Iqbal	Mohammed Islam, Muhammed Afzal, Mohammed Kazi, Lin Homer	Various concerning postal voting	4 April 2005 petition allowed, election void
29 June 2003	Park ward, Calderdale metropolitan borough	C M Saghir, Shakir Saghir, Faisal Saghir	M Najib and 3 ors	All postal ballot pilot failed. Breach of duty. Improper and unfair conduct	22 March 2005 Petition struck out
29 June 2003	Bordesley Green, Birmingham city council	Jamil Akhtar and 3 ors	Shah Jahan and 6 ors	Disputing postal ballot papers (tampering and personation	4 April 2005 Petition allowed, election void
30 June 2004	Derringham ward, Kingston upon Hull	John Philip Considine	John Didrichsen	Various (postal ballot papers	24 November 2004 election void
6 July 2004	Flintshire	Peter Pemberton	Stella Jones	Tyrone Wilcox was disqualified from standing for election	20 December 2004 petition dismissed

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what re-training is given to judges ticketed to try rape; and after what intervals from the date of their ticketing such training is given; [586]

(2) what the contents are of the Judicial Studies Boards serious sexual offence courses; and who is obliged to attend them; [590]

(3) what training on trying rape is given to judges prior to them being ticketed to hear such trials. [595]

Harriet Harman: Judicial training is the responsibility of the Judicial Studies Board (JSB), an independent body chaired by Lord Justice Keene.

No judge may hear a case involving rape or a serious sexual offence in the first instance without first having received appropriate JSB training, and the designated course for this is the Serious Sexual Offences Seminar (SSOS). Those authorised will be called to continuation training every three years from the date of their first attendance. SSOS is currently designed to cater for both those newly authorised and those receiving continuation training on the basis that a strong element of the training is in the sharing of experiences in general discussions, and in particular during the syndicate work for sentencing and practical problems. However, the question as to whether there should be separate seminars for those attending for the first time, and those receiving continuation training, is kept under review.

The seminar is currently a residential two-day (over three) event and past programmes have included talks on the following:

(1) research into public attitudes to sexual offending and the views of complainants and victims on the way in which sexual offences proceedings are handled.

(2) The policies and practices of the police and Crown Prosecution Service in handling serious sexual offences.

(3) Issues of evidential and procedural law and practice which bear on the conduct of trials in such cases.

(4) Sentencing issues and the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders in the community and in prison. Also included in the programme is a series of discussions, in small groups, of trial and sentencing issues.

In addition, judges of every rank, including the High Court and the Court of Appeal, who exercise the criminal jurisdiction, also received some training on the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as part of a programme of training on the Criminal Justice Reforms that ran between January and March 2005. This was supplemented with written material provided at the time the Act came into force.

Newly appointed High Court Judges attend a Serious Sexual Offences Seminar at the earliest opportunity if they have not recently done so in a previous capacity. Further continuation training for High Court Judges is arranged at their request.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what monitoring is carried out of the frequency with which individual judges allow applications to admit previous sexual history in rape trials. [589]

Harriet Harman: The Government do not monitor decisions made by individual judges in exercise of their judicial discretion.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of rape trials were cracked at court with the defendant tendering a plea of guilty to a lesser offence during *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [611]

Harriet Harman: In 2003 one (0.4 per cent.) case out of 286 cracked at court because the defendant tendered a guilty plea to a lesser offence. In 2004, it was two (0.8 per cent.) out of 254.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Business Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the 2005 business rates revaluation in England was revenue-neutral. [377]

Mr. Woolas: The Local Government Finance Act 1988 limits the increase in the non-domestic multiplier in line with the retail prices index and takes into account losses from appeals over the life of the rating lists. This ensures that no additional revenue is collected purely as a result of revaluation.

The total yield for 2004–05 (provisional outturn) is £16,214 million. Based on current estimates from local authorities, the estimated total yield for 2005–06 is £17,000 million.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he expects the 2007 council tax revaluation in England to be revenue-neutral. [278]

Mr. Woolas: The Government set out in its 2001 White Paper "Strong Local Leadership—Quality Public Services" its policy that revaluation should not lead to a change in the overall council tax yield.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effects on *(a)* the council tax base and *(b)* council tax receipts of reducing council tax discounts on (i) empty homes and (ii) second homes in England. [281]

Mr. Woolas: According to budget returns from local authorities, reductions in council tax discounts in England for long-term empty and second homes for 2004–05 led to increases in the council tax base of 42,600 and 62,700 Band D equivalent properties respectively.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect information on the effect of changes to these discounts on council tax receipts.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average Band D council tax in *(a)* county councils, *(b)* metropolitan councils, *(c)* unitary councils and *(d)* London boroughs was in each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06. [291]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Band D council tax[1], 2 adults for area

£

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[2]
Shire county	666	738	796	848	903	992	1,129	1,198	1,246
Metropolitan	779	833	878	919	968	1,017	1,098	1,143	1,190
Shire unitary	698	736	779	825	879	958	1,066	1,145	1,197
London	651	687	731	778	841	895	1,058	1,119	1,162
Total England	688	747	798	847	901	976	1,102	1,167	1,214

[1] Amounts shown are headline taxes, before transitional relief and benefits.

[2] Amounts shown for 2005–06 are before capping

Source:

BR1, BR2 and BR3 forms

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to introduce council tax revaluation transitional relief in England in 2007; and if he will make a statement. [306]

Mr. Woolas: The Government are committed to a transitional relief scheme. They will consult on their proposals for the scheme at the same time as they consult on proposals for revaluing and reforming council tax in the light of the Lyons Inquiry.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average council tax per dwelling levied in each billing authority in England was in each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06. [356]

Mr. Woolas: The figures requested have been made available in the Library of the House.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of local government revenue expenditure in England was financed by council tax in each year since 1996–97; and what the estimated proportion for 2005–06 is. [358]

Mr. Woolas: The proportion of local government revenue expenditure financed by council tax in England each year from 1996–97 is shown in the following table.

Council tax as a percentage of local government revenue expenditure

	Percentage
1996–97	22
1997–98	24
1998–99	25
1999–2000	25
2000–01	25
2001–02	25
2002–03	25
2003–04	25
2004–05	26

The data are as reported by local authorities and are taken from outturn figures for 1996–97 to 2003–04 and budget estimates for 2004–05. The figures shown are gross of council tax benefit.

Estimates are not yet available for 2005–06.

HomeBuy

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Social HomeBuy scheme is voluntary for housing associations. [366]

Yvette Cooper: The Government's detailed proposals on Social HomeBuy, which would help social tenants to purchase a share in their rented home at a discount, are set out in our consultation document—"HomeBuy—expanding the opportunity to own"—launched on 1 April 2005. The document makes clear that Social HomeBuy will be voluntary for both housing associations and local authorities.

The consultation period ends on 24 June and the aim is to have the new scheme running by April 2006.

Housing (South Hampshire)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with *(a)* the South East England Regional Assembly and *(b)* the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire and its constituent local authorities on the level of infrastructure required to support the house building targets set out in the draft sub-regional strategy for South Hampshire. [737]

Yvette Cooper: Officials from the Government office for the south-east (GOSE) were invited by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire to attend their meetings, and have taken a close interest in progress on the strategy for South Hampshire. As a result, South Hampshire was mentioned in the Departments five-year Strategy: 'Homes for All'.

Where local partners want to pursue planned growth that is consistent with existing or emerging Regional Spatial Strategies, and subject to the normal statutory procedures, the Government will support them. Senior officials from GOSE and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have met with local authority officers in South Hampshire to take forward this commitment.

I have not had any discussions with the Regional assembly on this subject.

Local Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government plan to move to a four-year election cycle for local government. [289]

Mr. Woolas: The Government are committed to examining the case for simplifying the current local government election cycle by moving towards 'whole council' elections every four years.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to conduct future local elections, in whole or part, via remote electronic voting; and if he will make a statement. [376]

Harriet Harman: I have been asked to reply.

As we made clear in our response to The Electoral Commission's report, 'Delivering democracy? The future of postal voting', laid before the House on 9 December 2004, the Government remain committed to the goal of multi-channel elections, in which voters choices will include e-voting channels. Our strategy for achieving this goal is to encourage local authorities to continue the programme of local electoral pilots, including remote e-voting.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authorities in England have schemes allowing councillors to make grants out of public funds; and what monitoring there is of the uses to which such funds are put. [85]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The discussion document, "Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter" (January 2005), suggests ideas about devolving to each ward's councillors control over a small pot of money for the benefit of that ward.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable is for capping local authorities in 2005–06. [375]

Mr. Woolas: All nine authorities which were designated have challenged the maximum budgets proposed. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is receiving delegations from all the authorities to listen to their cases and will carefully consider both their formal challenges and their representations at the meetings before taking final decisions.

In-year capping is subject to approval by the House of Commons and we aim to have completed any necessary parliamentary stages before the summer recess.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to amend the local government pension scheme; and if he will make a statement. [284]

Mr. Woolas: A statutory consultation exercise on proposals to amend the local government pension scheme in England and Wales began on 1 April 2005 and concludes on 31 May 2005. Once the responses have been carefully considered a decision will be taken on the next steps. In due course other statutory amendments to the Scheme will come forward within the requirements of the Superannuation Act 1972, and after full consultation with all the interested parties.

London Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to reassess the role of the *(a)* Government office for London and *(b)* Greater London authority; and if he will make a statement. [287]

Jim Fitzpatrick: A joint Treasury/Office of the Deputy Prime Minister review is currently taking place on the future role of the Government office network, including the Government office for London. The review's emerging proposals were announced in the 2005 Budget report. The final report will be published later this year.

The Government gave a manifesto commitment to review the powers of the London Mayor and the Greater London authority. We will provide more details on this review in due course.

Negative Subsidy

Paul Holmes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was taken in negative subsidy from *(a)* all councils and *(b)* Chesterfield borough council in each of the last two years. [581]

Yvette Cooper: Total negative subsidy in 2004–05 was £620,543,656. The equivalent figure, representing the total negative housing element for 2003–04 was £706,268,335. Negative subsidy generated by some councils is captured so that it can be redistributed to other authorities with an assumed deficit. It is not retained by central Government.

Negative subsidy for Chesterfield in 2004–05 was £3,559,478. The borough's negative housing element in 2003–04 was £3,508,419.

The definition of negative subsidy was changed by the Local Government Act 2003, which came into force on 1 April 2004. The figures given above are directly comparable, though the terminology changed between the financial years.

Regional Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what *(a)* powers, *(b)* responsibilities and *(c)* functions the Government have allocated to regional chambers since November 2004; [285]

(2) what plans the Government have to transfer powers and responsibility to the regional chambers; and if he will make a statement. [288]

Yvette Cooper: Regional assemblies have not been given any new powers or responsibilities since November 2004. The Government stated in our manifesto that we would continue to devolve further responsibilities to the existing regional bodies in relation to planning, housing, economic development and transport. We will, as we take forward our regional policies, continue to include the regional assemblies in our considerations.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what role county councils will play in the allocation of housing numbers by district under the new regional spatial strategies. [290]

Yvette Cooper: Regional spatial strategies (RSSs) contain housing numbers by district, and the draft revisions are prepared by the regional planning body (RPB) for the region. RPBs in all regions have not less than 60 per cent. of their members drawn from local authorities, including county councils.

RPBs are required to seek the advice of certain authorities, including county councils when preparing, keeping under review and implementing RSSs, and these authorities are required to give the RPB their advice. These authorities must have the opportunity to prepare the detailed proposals for different provision for different parts of the region, if the RPB decides to make such provision. The RPB must also consult statutory consultees including county councils prior to examination in public of the strategy.

Tenants Rental Payments

Paul Holmes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total revenue received by Chesterfield borough council in tenants' rent payments was in each year since 1997; and what proportion of this revenue was taken by central Government to fund housing benefit. [202]

Yvette Cooper: The rental income received by Chesterfield in each year from 1997 is as shown in the following table, the figures are taken from the audited subsidy claim forms provided by the local authority. Government receipts from rental income are not hypothecated to the benefit system.

Before April 2004 the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) comprised two elements: a housing element and a rent rebate element. Where an authority's housing element generated an assumed surplus, it was offset against the rent rebate element simply as an accounting convenience to ensure simplicity of administration. It did not fund the costs of housing benefit to central Government.

Chesterfield borough council rental income since 1997

Financial year	£
1997–98	18,333,096
1998–99	18,069,527
1999–2000	19,518,000
2000–01	19,331,286
2001–02	20,141,279
2002–03	20,930,604
2003–04	21,176,090
2004–05	21,694,156

Thames Gateway Bridge

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to make a statement on the commencement date for the full public inquiry into the proposed Thames Gateway Bridge. [114]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister, First Secretary of State, and the Secretary of State for Transport announced the commencement date for the public inquiry into the proposed Thames Gateway Bridge on 25 February 2005 and reaffirmed it in a further letter on 17 May. The inquiry will open on Tuesday 7 June, 2005 with the initial inquiry sessions held at Charlton Athletic Football Club. Upon conclusion of those first sessions, there will be an adjournment until 13 September, 2005 when the inquiry will reconvene at Woolwich Town Hall, Greenwich.

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received about the proposed Thames Gateway Bridge; and if he will make a statement. [115]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Transport, the Planning Inspectorate and the London boroughs of Greenwich and Newham received in the region of 3,000 representations about the Thames Gateway Bridge. The representations came from a wide range of sources including businesses, community organisations and local residents. Of those objecting to the proposal, the issues most frequently raised were:

Lack of choice for different crossing schemes e.g. rail.

Concerns about the information provided in the traffic and transport assessment.

Adverse environmental impacts, that the scheme undermines national and local transport policies.

Traffic will not be local.

Impact on air quality is unclear.

Job creation figures are questionable.

Traffic forecasts are unreliable and the regeneration case for the bridge not proven.

Air pollution, noise pollution and congestion of the existing road network.

Noise impacts, flight paths, flood plain, the future of the Woolwich ferry and community isolation.

Impact on the existing highway network.

Travellers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to change planning *(a)* regulations, *(b)* legislation and *(c)* guidelines relating to Travellers. [280]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued a draft for consultation of a new planning circular for Gypsy and Traveller sites in December 2004. We have received over 300 responses and will announce our conclusions when we have considered the representations made on the draft circular. New planning regulations relating to the use of temporary stop notices came into effect on 7 March. Work is under way on new guidance to local authorities and police on enforcement plans.

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to announce the conclusions of his review of Travellers and planning law. [532]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued a draft for consultation of a new planning circular for Gypsy and Traveller sites in December 2004. We have received over 300 responses and will announce our conclusions when we have considered the representations made on the draft circular.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 25 May 2005

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Further Education

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what changes are planned to the budget for further education colleges in England for the academic year 2005/06; [742]

(2) what provision is being made for colleges of further education in England to maintain existing part-time adult courses. [760]

Bill Rammell: On 15 November 2004 the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) received its grant letter for 2005/06 from the Department. The letter reiterated our key priorities for 2005/06 to meet the needs of young people, those lacking literacy, numeracy and English language skills and those without a foundation of skills for employment. It also allocated an additional £630 million for the financial year 2005–06 when compared to 2004–05 planned expenditure—an increase of over 7 per cent. The LSC allocates funds to providers to deliver our priorities which are set out annually in the grant letter. Individual colleges and providers agree plans with the LSC and funding is allocated accordingly.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Dairy Cattle

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether cull dairy cows destined for the beef market after the end of the over-30-months scheme will be subject to dual inspection by milk and meat inspectors. [149]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

I am advised by the Food Standards Agency that dairy hygiene inspectors carry out hygiene inspections focusing on facilities and equipment on production holdings. When the restrictions imposed by the over-30-months scheme are eventually lifted, dairy cows, which are no longer required to produce milk for human consumption can be slaughtered for meat for human consumption in licensed slaughterhouses. All such animals would be subject to ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections in licensed slaughterhouses by an official veterinary surgeon.

Motor Sports

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) under what circumstances motor sports can take place on land eligible for single farm payments; [37]

(2) if the Government will grant a general exemption to motor sports taking place on land eligible for single farm payments on the same basis as other activities that are allowed on such land; [38]

(3) if she will include motorcycle trials in Section B of the Guidance on Single Farm Payment Scheme and Non-Agricultural Use as an activity with restriction and remove them from Section C. [39]

Jim Knight: Land used in support of claims for payment under the 2005 Single Payment Scheme (SPS) must be at claimants' disposal for the 10-month period nominated on their claim forms. Under recently updated guidance issued by the Department, motor sports have been moved to Section B from Section C. This means such may take place on up to 28 days during the nominated 10-month period, in addition to all of the remaining two months of the year. It remains the case that all claims for payment are subject to observance of set cross-compliance conditions, which apply for the whole calendar year. There are no immediate plans to further update the guidance, but it will be reviewed for the 2006 scheme in the light of experience of this first year of operation of the SPS.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on whether motor sports are an activity which is consistent with land being considered as remaining in agricultural use. [40]

Jim Knight: The Department has drawn up guidance on the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) and non-agricultural use of land which balances the need for diversification opportunities with the necessity to abide by the EU rules on eligibility of land under the scheme. That guidance is built around the degree to which non-agricultural use impedes or is inconsistent with normal farming activities and has recently been updated to provide for more flexibility in respect of motor sports.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the impact of the Single Farm Payment Scheme on farm land being used for motor sports. [148]

Jim Knight: Land used in support of claims for payment under the 2005 Single Payment Scheme (SPS) must be at claimants' disposal for the 10-month period nominated on their claim forms. Under recently updated guidance issued by the Department, motor sports may take place on up to 28 days during the nominated 10-month period, in addition to all of the remaining two months of the year. It remains the case that all claims for payment are subject to observance of set cross-compliance conditions, which apply for the whole calendar year. The updated guidance takes on board representations made by motor sports interests and, overall, we would expect the impact of the SPS on farmland used for such sports to be limited.

Stephen Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to define motorcycle trials as an activity with greater restriction for the purposes of the guidance on the single payment scheme and non-agricultural use. [830]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 24 May 2005]:* Land used in support of claims for payment under the 2005 Single Payment Scheme (SPS) must be at claimants' disposal for the 10-month period nominated on their claim forms. Under recently updated guidance issued by the Department, motor sports, including motorcycle trials, may take place on up to 28 days during the nominated 10-month period, in addition to all of the remaining two months of the year. It remains the case that all claims for payment are subject to observance of set cross-compliance conditions, which apply for the whole calendar year. There are no immediate plans to further update the guidance, but it will be reviewed for the 2006 scheme in the light of experience of this first year of operation of the SPS.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what assessment he has made of the reasons for the attrition rate in rape prosecutions. [593]

The Solicitor-General: Research indicates a number of reasons for the attrition rate in rape cases. Victims may withdraw for fear of not being believed; others are fearful that judgments will be made about their behaviour; some withdraw through fear of the process, particularly the court system; and victims can be scared of reprisals.

In 2002, the Government implemented the Rape Action Plan (RAP) in order to address these issues. There will be an audit of its implementation later this year. HMIC and HMCPSI will then review again the manner in which the police and the CPS deal with rape cases. This review work will enable the Government to determine what is working and what remains to be done in tackling attrition in rape cases.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what the Crown Prosecution Service's policy is on dealing with defence applications to admit previous sexual history in rape cases which were not made in accordance with rules of court prior to trial. [597]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service's policy is that advocates must be robust both in dealing with such applications and in ensuring that the correct procedure is followed. This applies to applications made before the trial and at trial. The policy also provides that, if the court grants leave to cross-examine a complainant about previous sexual history, the prosecuting advocate should review the position relating to special measures, and in particular should consider whether it is necessary to make an application to the court for one more of the special measures provided by the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999, or to apply to vary a pre-existing direction.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General (1) what monitoring is carried out by *(a)* the Law Officers and *(b)* the Crown Prosecution Service on the timing of applications by the defence to admit previous sexual history in rape trials, in relation to the trial date; [598]

(2) what monitoring is carried out by *(a)* the Law Officers and *(b)* the Crown Prosecution Service of defence applications to introduce previous sexual history into rape trials. [599]

The Solicitor-General: The joint inspection of rape cases carried out in 2002 by HMIC and HMCPSI made a large number of recommendations to improve the investigation and prosecution of rape cases, nearly all of which the Government accepted. It was not recommended that either the Law Officers or the Crown Prosecution Service monitor applications to admit previous sexual history or the timing of such applications, and no such monitoring is carried out. But the Home Office has commissioned research into the operation of section 41 Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999, which it will publish in due course.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what quality control the Crown Prosecution Service carries out on barristers instructed to prosecute rape trials. [600]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service instructs experienced and committed advocates to prosecute cases involving allegations of rape. This involves seeking to instruct advocates of the necessary skill, competence and sensitivity to prosecute rape cases. In London and the south-east advocates are instructed from a specialist list. In other parts of the country, Grade 4 advocates are instructed where possible. CPS Areas have been advised in guidance issued in August 2003 that local monitoring is appropriate. Examples of local monitoring carried out by CPS Areas include the monitoring of the performance of counsel at trial by experienced caseworkers; monitoring by rape specialists for part of the trial and the raising of performance issues with local Heads of Chambers and at Joint Advocates Selection Committee as appropriate.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General how many specialist rape prosecutors there are in England and Wales. [601]

The Solicitor-General: The CPS has appointed 520 specialist rape prosecutors across England and Wales. In addition, each area appoints a rape co-ordinator, whose function is to provide guidance on good practice to specialist rape prosecutors.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what advice the Crown Prosecution Service gives to police about the inclusion of details of a rape complainant's previous sexual history in a witness statement made for trial. [602]

The Solicitor-General: It is the duty of the police to investigate allegations of rape and to obtain evidence. The relevance, and so the admissibility, of a complainant's previous sexual history has to be resolved according to the particular circumstances of the case. Accordingly, there is no general advice given by the Crown Prosecution Service to the police about the inclusion of details of a rape complainant's previous sexual history in a witness statement.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what proportion of applications to admit previous sexual history into rape trials was opposed in the last period for which figures are available; and what proportion was not opposed by the Crown Prosecution Service. [606]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service does not keep statistical records of applications to admit previous sexual history in rape trials, and so there are no figures available to ascertain the proportion of applications that were opposed and not opposed.

The Home Office has commissioned research into the operation of section 41 Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999, which it will publish in due course.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what training the Crown Prosecution Service provides for barristers instructed for the prosecution in rape cases. [607]

The Solicitor-General: In November 2004, the CPS provided training to the Criminal Bar Association on its legal guidance on the Sexual Offences Act 2003, and in particular on the exercise of prosecutorial discretion and charging under the 2003 Act. On a local level, some CPS Areas have provided training to their local bar on the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as well as circulating to them the CPS public policy statement on rape.

The CPS is presently in discussion with the Head of Education and Training for the Bar and the Criminal Bar Association on the best way to deliver, accredit and evaluate training to prosecution advocates on sexual offences.

DEFENCE

IVF Treatment

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why IVF treatment is not available to service personnel or their spouses in Germany through *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the British Forces Germany Health Service and *(c)* primary care trusts. [743]

Mr. Touhig: A number of options are available to Service personnel and their dependants requiring IVF treatment while posted to Germany:

> Although the British Forces Germany Health Service (BFG HS) is not funded for the provision of full IVF and equivalent treatment, it does fund the investigation of infertility and the provision of drug treatments following IVF. This takes place in our primary care facilities or our regional contracted German hospitals. It will also fund correction of any anatomical abnormality that may be causing infertility. In addition Artificial Insemination by Husband (AIH) is available at one of our contracted German hospitals.
>
> A patient can seek private treatment in Germany bearing the full cost themselves. In unusual cases presenting strong medical/social reasons for IVF treatment, BFG HS may pay for treatment.
>
> If a patient has embarked on investigation or treatment in the United Kingdom on a NHS programme and is then posted to Germany, they receive full administrative support, including the provision of transport by air trooper. The Ministry of Defence also takes a sympathetic view with regard to the posting of personnel while they are undertaking a course of treatment in the UK by deferring the posting if it is the individual's wish and if it is possible to do so.
>
> For patients wishing to return to the UK to begin treatment for IVF, the BFG HS makes use of the excellent facilities offered by a charity based service which is provided at Hammersmith hospital in London at no cost to the patient or the MOD. In these cases BFG HS authorises transport by air trooper. In other instances where personnel wish to be posted back to the UK and this is supported by their posting authority, they can be referred to their local primary care trust (PCT) in the UK for the duration of the treatment.

The Department is currently reformulating its policy on IVF treatment to ensure it is consistent with the standards contained in the current National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines.

Royal Air Force

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost was of producing 'Air Publication 3003: A Brief History of the Royal Air Force'; and how many copies of this book were produced. [671]

Mr. Touhig: The total cost of producing 'AP3003: A Brief History of the Royal Air Force' was £100,668.00. 60,000 copies were produced.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Energy Ltd.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much public money British Energy Ltd. has received since 1996. [754]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have provided rescue and restructuring aid to British Energy during and as a result of the company's financial restructuring which started in September 2002 and was completed in January 2005. The rescue aid took the form of a loan facility to British Energy which has been repaid in full with interest. Payments made to date by Government in relation to restructuring aid relate to the funding of historic liabilities. The following documents, which are in the public domain, provide the relevant information:

> Trade and Industry Departmental Report 2003 and 2004 (the Departmental Report 2005 is due to be published before the recess); and
>
> Department of Trade and Industry Consolidated Resource Accounts 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Energy Policy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish recent analyses carried out by his Department on the opportunities provided by nuclear power. [64]

Malcolm Wicks: There has been no recent analysis carried out by the Department of Trade and Industry on opportunities provided by nuclear power.

Gas

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to undertake emergency repairs to ensure security of supply in the gas sector. [41]

Malcolm Wicks: This is a matter for National Grid Transco. NGT has responsibility for maintenance, investment and operation of the high pressure National

Transmission System (NTS) system and for keeping the gas network in balance. NGT currently also has responsibility for the low pressure regional gas distribution networks.

Similarly, the repair and maintenance of facilities for offshore production, on shore gas storage and gas importation is a matter for the owners of this infrastructure.

The 0800 111 999 national gas emergency service remains the same and will be managed by Transco even after the impending sales of four of the regional gas distribution networks.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on security of supply *(a)* from UK energy sources and *(b)* to the UK gas system. [43]

Malcolm Wicks: As required by Section 172 of the Energy Act 2004, I will report to Parliament on the security of energy supplies later this year, and annually thereafter.

National Grid Transco's preliminary winter outlook report will be published shortly. This will consider the supply and demand position on electricity and gas for the forthcoming winter.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will discuss with Ofgem halting their reform of the gas exit regime. [44]

Malcolm Wicks: This is a regulatory matter for the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority. The authority plans to introduce new exit arrangements as part of the regulatory, commercial and operational framework necessary to protect customers in a divested industry structure following the potential sale of Transco's gas distribution networks.

These arrangements will be necessary as both distribution networks and shippers will be competing to secure transmission system exit capacity from Transco. Ofgem have undertaken a public consultation on its proposals, which should also improve the operation of the gas market by providing investment signals to Transco that would assist it in ensuring that pipeline capacity for GB is delivered on an economic and efficient basis.

Hydrogen Energy

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when his Department will respond to the recommendations made to his Department in December 2004 concerning a strategic framework for hydrogen technology; when he expects the UK to have a hydrogen energy strategy; and if he will make a statement. [578]

Malcolm Wicks: In 2004, the Department for Trade and Industry commissioned E4Tech, Element Energy, and Eoin Lees Energy to prepare a report of how the UK might develop a strategic framework for hydrogen energy activities in the UK. The report has been published on the Department's website and can be found at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/hydrogen.shtml.

The study considers the costs and environmental benefits of a number of possible hydrogen energy chains, and concludes that by 2030 six hydrogen energy transport chains could provide, for the UK, cost-competitive CO_2 reductions and greater energy security. The Government are currently considering the report's recommendations, and will publish these, together with a considered response soon.

Miners' Compensation Scheme

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria his Department used in making the decision to refuse compensation claims for surface workers employed by British Coal in coal prep plants. [474]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 23 May 2005]*: The Department's medical advice is that the levels of dust in coal preparation plants were insufficient to cause disabling lung disease. The Claimants' Solicitors Group withdrew their court action in December 2004. It would be inappropriate for the Department to make any payment where there is no liability to do so. However, the Department would investigate any detailed claim brought by a surface worker in compliance with the relevant pre action protocol for industrial disease claims.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will place in the Library papers prepared in relation to the signing of the agreement with Vendside Ltd. for miners' industrial disease compensation. [475]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 23 May 2005]*: The Department have held discussions with the Union of Democratic Mineworkers with regard to the signing of claims handling agreements for both respiratory and vibration related disabilities for former miners. The Department will not be disclosing the content of background papers relating those discussions as the release of such information would inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purpose of deliberation.

New Businesses (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new businesses have been established in Coventry since 1997. [623]

Alun Michael: There were 453,000 business start-ups in England and Wales in 2004 according to Barclays bank's latest survey of business creation includes non-VAT registered firms. This is the highest number since the survey started in 1988.

Barclays data show that there were 1,600 business start-ups in the Coventry local authority area in 2003 and a further 2,200 in 2004. Data for local authorities are not available for before 2003.

DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations for the Coventry local authority area are shown below for 1997 to 2003. Data for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

Coventry

	Number
1997	615
1998	640
1999	650
2000	620
2001	655
2002	595
2003	690

Source:

Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2003, Small Business Service, available from the Libraries of the House and also at http://www.sbs.gov.uk/vats

VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Only 1.8 million out of 4 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2003.

Nuclear Industry

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. is involved in the proposed building of a uranium enrichment facility in New Mexico; whether his Department has been consulted on the project; and if he will make a statement. [470]

Malcolm Wicks: British Nuclear Fuels has a 100 per cent. interest in Westinghouse, the business focus of which is front end nuclear fuel services. Westinghouse has a minority interest of 24.5 per cent. in Louisiana Enrichment Services II partnership (LES). LES is currently going through a licensing application process for the potential construction of a new uranium enrichment facility in New Mexico, based on Urenco's technology. Clearly no construction has yet commenced. Urenco own the remaining controlling interest (75.5 per cent.) in LES. Urenco is one third owned by British Nuclear Fuels with the remaining two thirds being owned by Dutch and German organisations.

Officials have been kept informed regarding this project.

Phoenix Fund

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much funding from the Phoenix Fund has been invested in *(a)* sole traders, *(b)* small business and *(c)* social enterprises through community development finance initiatives in each year since its inception; and if he will make a statement. [761]

Alun Michael: As at 31 March 2005 community development finance institutions supported by the DTI's Phoenix Fund have made 2,560 loans with a value of £16,826,070. These figures can be broken down as follows:

	Number of loans	*Value of loans (£)*
2001–02	70	320,822
2002–03	485	2,770,169
2003–04	857	5,556,985
2004–05	1148	8,178,094
Total	2,560	16,826,070

As at 31 March 2005 1,572 loans worth £6,873,718.27 have been made to sole traders and 988 loans worth £9,952,351.73 have been made to SMEs and social enterprises. Lending to social enterprises is aggregated within the SME figures and is not available separately. However, a number of CDFIs supported by the Phoenix Fund specifically identify social enterprises as part of their customer base. The in-year breakdown is as follows:

	Sole traders		*SMEs (inc. social enterprises)*	
	Number of loans	*Value of loans (£)*	*Number of loans*	*Value of loans (£)*
2001–02	50	160,937.89	20	159,884.11
2002–03	242	1,029,001.71	243	1,741,167.29
2003–04	501	2,244,846.88	356	3,312,138.12
2004–05	779	3,438,931.79	369	4,739,162.21
Total	1,572	6,873,718.27	988	9,952,351.73

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research the Department commissioned on the levels of interest rates charges by community development finance institutions supported by the Phoenix Fund; and if he will make a statement. [764]

Alun Michael: The Department commissioned GHK Consultants to undertake a wide-ranging evaluation of the first two rounds of Phoenix Fund support for Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs). GHK published its findings and recommendations in May 2004.

The evaluation looked at many issues facing CDFIs in the provision of debt finance to enterprises in disadvantaged communities. This included the assessment of risk in relation to loan management. (The GHK report can be down-loaded from the "Research and Statistics" (Improving Access to Finance) section of the SBS website at: http://www.sbs.gov.uk).

Through the Department's core funding of the Community Development Finance Association (CDFA), the trade association for CDFIs, more recent and specific research has been conducted into CDFI interest rates. A summary of this can be found in this year's "Inside Out", the CDFA's report on the industry for 2004. (Copies available through the CDFA website at: http://www.cdfa.org.uk).

The CDFA's research concluded that CDFI interest rates vary, generally depending on the market being served, client type, loan size and term. Social enterprise lenders continue to operate with the lowest average rates at 9.22 per cent. static and + 3.07 per cent. above base rate. A number of CDFIs targeting for-profit micro-enterprises use static rates with an average of 12.95 per cent., with others using variable rates with points above base rate at an average of + 4.23 per cent.

CDFIs serve a diverse range of customers unable to access all the finance they need from more conventional sources and their rates reflect the risks and cost bases of the particular circumstances in which they operate.

Yorkshire and the Humber

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what public funds have been made available for economic development in the Yorkshire and the Humber region in each of the last three years from *(a)* national sources and *(b)* EU funds. [31]

Alun Michael: Figures are grant only to avoid double counting of match funding as many of the projects used other national funds as match funding.

European funding works on calendar years.

	2002	*2003*	*2004*
Objective 1 European Regional Development Fund	28,610,888	66,140,394	77,692,767
Objective 1 European Social Fund	27,372,602	29,370,428	32,980,128
Objective 1 European Agricultural Guidance Guarantee Fund	1,221,622	2,896,258	2,020,678
Funding Stream	2002	2003	2004
Objective 2 European Regional Development Fund	20,884,353	49,670,196	53,432,914
Objective 2 European Social Fund	1,647,367	9,131,799	5,773,713
Objective 3 European Social Fund	21,387,994	22,560,024	27,682,844
URBAN European Regional Development Fund	1,533	816,419	1,660,039

Yorkshire Forward has made available a total of £136.30 million towards economic development in Yorkshire and Humber over the last three years (excluding European funding) Yorkshire Forward works on financial years.

	Yorkshire Forward
2002–03	27,800,000
2003–04	42,600,000
2004–05	65,900,000

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will reply to the letters from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to *(a)* Tarquin Crirst dated 8 March and *(b)* Ms Gill Wright dated 30 March. [69]

Tessa Jowell: I replied on 19 May 2005 to my right hon. Friend's letter of 30 March and shall reply shortly to his letter of 8 March.

Gospel Choirs

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of the Arts Council England's budget was spent on financial support for gospel choirs in the last year for which figures are available. [566]

Mr. Lammy: Arts Council England's total funding for gospel music for the financial year 2004–05 was £879,956 and was allocated through the Grants for the Arts programme. This accounted for 0.76 per cent. of the total amount spent through Grants for the Arts. While the final figure for total Arts Council England spend in 2004–05 has yet to be confirmed officially, we expect it to be around £367 million.

In addition to this, Youth Music, the national music charity funded by Arts Lottery money, has awarded £2,896,640 to projects that incorporate a gospel singing element since it was launched in 1999.

Licensing Act

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact of the Licensing Act 2003 on *(a)* travelling circuses, *(b)* village halls and *(c)* village shops. [61]

James Purnell: The Licensing Act 2003 does not fully come into effect until November 2005. My Department has been working closely with a wide range of stakeholder groups and representatives including:

(a) The Association of Circus Proprietors of Great Britain, Circus Arts Forum and the Arts Council of England;

(b) Action with Communities in Rural England;

(c) Association of Convenience Stores (representing the Rural Shops Alliance).

We are continuing discussions with these organisations so they can help their sectors adapt to the new licensing system.

The deregulatory nature of the Act will significantly reduce bureaucracy by combining six existing licensing regimes into one integrated scheme. It is estimated that a total of £1.97 billion will be saved by those affected by the new regime over its first 10 years of operation.

My Department will continue to discuss relevant issues with affected stakeholder groups as implementation proceeds.

Norfolk Sport

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much public money has been given to Norfolk Sport in the last five years. [471]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is shown in the following table:

£

	Exchequer	Lottery	Total
2000–01	—	—	0
2001–02	—	20,000	20,000
2002–03	—	1,026,265	1,026,265
2003–04	10,000	—	10,000
2004–05	[1]112,675	20,000	132,675
Grand total	122,675	1,066,265	1,188,940

[1] The figure £112,675 consisted of grants as follows: £21,775 for Step into Sport, £87,000 for Community Sports Coach Scheme and £3,900 for Club.

Sport UK

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much public money has been given to Sport UK in the last five years. [472]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested in shown in the following table:

£ million

	Exchequer	Lottery	Total
2000–01	12.8	[1]24.0	38.1
2001–02	16.8	25.6	42.4
2002–03	16.3	21.4	37.7
2003–04	23.2	20.0	43.2
2004–05	23.1	[2]21.0	49.3
Grand total	92.2	118.5	210.7

[1] £1.3 million relates to additional lottery funding to UK Sport from Sport England.

[2] £5.2 million relates to additional lottery funding to UK Sport from Sport England.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest £0.1 million and include investment earnings on the NLDF balance. The 2004–05 figures is unaudited.

CABINET OFFICE

Office of Public Sector Information

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the *(a)* role, *(b)* function and *(c)* budget of the Office of Public Sector Information. [870]

Mr. Murphy: The Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) provides a wide range of services to the public, information industry, government and the wider public sector relating to finding, using, sharing and trading information. OPSI has been formed from the resource of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO). It has an extended remit to advise on and regulate the operation of the re-use of public sector information. HMSO continues to exist and fulfil its core activities including responsibility for the publication of legislation and the management of Crown copyright operating from within OPSI.

The OPSI handles a range of information management policy:

leads on the UK implementation of the European Directive on the re-use of Public Sector Information which will be implemented into UK law on 1 July 2005

provides an Information Fair Trader Scheme (IFTS) founded on the principles of openness, transparency, fairness, compliance and challenge. This helps re-users of public sector information to know that they will be treated reasonably and fairly by public sector information providers

provides the Click-Use system for obtaining a licence to re-use Crown copyright material through an online licensing process

manages the Information Asset Register (IAR) that lists information assets held by the UK Government with a focus on unpublished material

provides a secretariat to the Advisory Panel On Public Sector Information (APPSI), which advises Ministers on how best to encourage the re-use of public sector information

The net budget for OPSI for 2005–06 is £2,014,616 which represents an increase of 3 per cent. over the costs of HMSO during 2004–05.

NORTHERN IRELAND

"A Shared Future"

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the implementation of the document "A Shared Future". [452]

Angela E. Smith: "A Shared Future—The Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland", was launched on 21 March 2005 by way of a Written Ministerial Statement.

My hon. Friend the Minister of State for Northern Ireland, Lord Rooker, will be taking forward the implementation of the policy through the publication of the triennial action plan. This is scheduled to be launched in the autumn.

Costello Report

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many letters *(a)* supporting and *(b)* opposing the findings of the Costello Report have been received by his Department; how many can be identified as pro forma letters in each case; and whether each pro forma letter received by his Department is treated as a single letter of support or opposition. [324]

Angela E. Smith: The Department has received over 200 letters on the new Post-Primary arrangements since the publication of the Report of the Post-Primary Review Working Group on 26 January 2004. It would not be appropriate to record these letters on the basis of whether they are supportive of or opposed to the new arrangements, due to the complexity of the various issues involved. The Department is aware of a number of letter writing campaigns. However, each letter is dealt with and responded to individually.

Domestic Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Government will publish their recommendations on domestic rates reform. [369]

Angela E. Smith: A report was published on 23 March setting out the consultation outcomes and next steps for reform of the domestic rating system in Northern Ireland. A copy of this report is available in the Library.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Payment

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's policy is towards publicising methods of paying benefits that do not require the recipient to hold a bank or similar account. [766]

Mr. Plaskitt: Direct payment into an account is now the normal method of payment for benefits and pensions, with more than 95 per cent. of customers being paid this way. Direct payment is a modern, secure and efficient way of making payments. It gives customers more choice and security and the taxpayer better value for money.

We have always recognised that there are a small number of customers who we cannot pay into an account. These customers are paid by cheque, which they can cash at the Post Office. While cheque payments are a suitable way of paying those people who genuinely cannot operate any sort of account, we do not believe they are appropriate for the vast majority of our customers (over 90 per cent. of whom have access to an account suitable for direct payment).

Customers are provided with all the information they need to choose the account which best meets their needs and circumstances. Those customers who do not think they can use an account are asked to contact the Department, where they can be given further advice and support.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions by what date the Government expect to meet their target to reduce the number of people on incapacity benefits by 1 million; and if he will make a statement. [884]

Margaret Hodge: Reducing the numbers of people on incapacity benefits by 1 million is a challenging and long-term aspiration. The Department is preparing proposals to support this aspiration and intend to publish a Green Paper shortly.

The Department has already made progress with existing policies and since 1997:

new claims are down by 30 per cent.;

growth in the case load has slowed significantly; and

in the last year, the caseload has stabilised with a statistically significant fall of 22,000 in the year to November 2004.

Further progress will require continued macroeconomic stability and further radical welfare reform to build on the success achieved to date.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will publish his proposals for reform of incapacity benefits; and if he will make a statement. [886]

Margaret Hodge: We plan to publish a Green Paper setting out our proposals for incapacity benefit reform shortly.

Pathways to Work

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he will make a statement on the Pathways to Work pilots; by what date the schemes will be rolled out to cover *(a)* one-third and *(b)* the whole country; and if he will make a statement. [818]

Margaret Hodge: Our Pathways to Work pilots aim to improve opportunities for people on incapacity benefits to get back to work by offering intensive help and support to address personal, health, employment and financial barriers to working, through a balance of rights and responsibilities.

The early successes of the pilots have encouraged us to go further. From October this year we will extend the pilots in three phases to cover one third of the country to be completed by October 2006. Further expansion to the whole country is dependent on additional resources being made available.

Work Experience

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment his Department has made of the need for greater flexibility in the operation of the rule preserving benefits for two weeks of work experience. [699]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 24 May 2005]:* To introduce greater flexibility, the Department introduced work trials to help people move into work by giving them the opportunity of trying out a job while remaining on benefit. With some exceptions, they are open to people unemployed for six months or more and claiming a qualifying benefit such as jobseeker's allowance. A work trial allows a jobseeker to check whether a job is likely to work out before leaving the security of benefit. It also gives employers the opportunity to test a person's suitability for a job. A trial can last up to 15 working days for jobs of 16 hours or more a week and which are expected to last for at least 13 weeks.

HEALTH

Diagnostic and Treatment Centres (Private)

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what restrictions she intends to place on the recruitment of staff from the NHS by the private diagnostic and treatment centres which she has recently announced. [481]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* For the first wave of our independent sector procurement programme we applied a policy of strict additionality to all contracts. This prevented independent sector providers from recruiting any staff who had worked in the national health service within the last six months. For the next phase of our procurement we are currently finalising the contract terms which will include appropriate additionality arrangements.

Health Service Expenditure

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total *(a)* hospital expenditure, *(b)* expenditure on community services, *(c)* expenditure on ambulance services and *(d)* total hospital and community health services expenditure was in each year since 1990–91 in (i) nominal terms and (ii) real terms. [233]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the expenditure on hospital and community services in England has been provided previously. I refer the hon. Member to the replies given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Hutton), on 9 March 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1911–12W and 18 March 2005, *Official Report*, columns 518–19W.

Expenditure figures for ambulance services expenditure are obtained from the financial returns of the service providers and are shown in the table.

It is not possible to provide comparable figures prior to 1996–97 and 2003–04 is the latest year for which data is available.

Expenditure by national health service ambulance trusts

£000

	Expenditure on ambulance services in nominal terms	*Expenditure on ambulance services in cash terms*
1996–97	711,530	598,738
1997–98	715,050	617,138
1998–99	738,259	655,530
1999–2000	781,544	709,103
2000–01	880,095	807,786
2001–02	989,773	931,574
2002–03	1,119,157	1,088,805
2003–04	1,175,965	1,175,965

Sources:
Annual financial returns of NHS trusts 1996–97 to 2003–04.
Her Majesty's Treasury gross domestic product deflator.

Heatwave Plan

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many finished consultant episodes of care have had as their primary diagnosis *(a)* sunburn, *(b)* heatstroke and sunstroke and *(c)* other hot weather-related diagnoses in each year since 1991. [258]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

Count of finished consultant episodes (FCEs) for selected diagnoses[1], national health service hospitals, England 1995–96 to 2003–04

	Sunburn	*Heatstroke and sunstroke*	*Other hot weather-related diagnoses*
1995–96	156	201	40
1996–97	90	114	41
1997–98	101	136	38
1998–99	64	106	29
1999–2000	115	145	46
2000–01	89	112	34
2001–02	93	120	43
2002–03	67	62	33
2003–04	91	159	38

[1] Selected diagnoses:
(a) Sunburn defined as the following ICD-10 codes in primary diagnosis:
L55.0 Sunburn of first degree
L55.1 Sunburn of second degree
L55.2 Sunburn of third degree
L55.8 Other sunburn
L55.9 Sunburn, unspecified
(b) Heatstroke and Sunstroke defined as the following ICD-10 codes in primary diagnosis:
T67.0 Heatstroke and sunstroke
T67.1 Heat syncope
T67.2 Heat cramp
T67.3 Heat exhaustion, anhydrotic
T67.4 Heat exhaustion due to salt depletion
T67.5 Heat exhaustion, unspecified
T67.6 Heat fatigue, transient
T67.7 Heat oedema
T67.8 Other effects of heat and light
T67.9 Effect of heat and light, unspecified
(c) Other hot weather-related diagnoses defined as the following ICD-10 codes in primary diagnosis:
L59.0 Erythema ab igne [dermatitis ab igne]
L74.0 Miliaria rubra (prickly heat)

Notes:
1. A FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.
2. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
3. Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2002–03 and 2003–04, which are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.

Source:
HES, Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Hospital Site Sales

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when she expects the sale of the former Severalls hospital site at Colchester to be completed; and what the reasons are for the length of time taken; [209]

(2) when she expects the sale of the former Turner Village hospital site at Colchester to be completed. [210]

Jane Kennedy: Part of the Severalls hospital site in the ownership of the Secretary of State for Health was transferred to English Partnerships on 6 April 2005, as part of a wider agreement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Part of the Turner Village hospital site that is no longer required for national health service use will also be transferred. This transfer is expected to be completed shortly and the future of the site will then be the responsibility of English Partnerships.

English Partnerships will be working with North Essex Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust and Colchester borough council in order to bring the Severalls hospital site to market. The timetable reflects the complex redevelopment issues affecting this land.

Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has commissioned on the effects on human health of hydrogenated vegetable oil; and if she will make a statement. [660]

Caroline Flint: The Government are concerned about the possible health effects, in particular on coronary health, from consuming certain fats. The Government as part of delivering its "Choosing Health" White Paper is developing a strategy for tackling fat intakes, which will include opportunities to reduce intakes of both saturated and "trans" fatty acids. There are currently no plans to commission research on the health effects of consuming hydrogenated vegetable oil.

MRSA

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of MRSA have been identified in hospitals in *(a)* England and *(b)* Devon in each of the last five years; and what guidance the Department has issued to (i) staff and (ii) visitors to reduce levels of MRSA. [109]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* The Department has issued a number of guidance documents, available on the Department's website, which are relevant to the control of methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). Key documents include, "Winning Ways—Working together to reduce Healthcare Associated Infection in England", "The epic project: developing national evidence-based guidelines for preventing healthcare associated infection; Phase 1: guidelines for preventing hospital-acquired infections", and the "National Institute for Clinical Excellence, Infection Control: prevention of healthcare associated infection in primary and community care".

The Department does not provide information for visitors, but the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines provide information on advising patients, their carers and the public. The Department has also produced a generic toolkit for creating patient information. This is available in the Library and is also available on the internet at http://www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/patientinformationtoolkit/.

The Department's mandatory surveillance system for MRSA blood stream infections in acute trusts in England began in April 2001. The information requested is shown in the table.

MRSA blood stream infections: mandatory surveillance scheme, April 2001 to September 2004

	Number of MRSA bacteraemia acute trusts, England	*Number of MRSA bacteraemia acute trusts, Devon*
April-March		
2001–02	7,249	181
2002–03	7,373	159
2003–04	7,684	199
April-September 2004	3,519	87
Total (1 April 2001 to September 2004)	25,825	626

NHS Direct

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether NHS Direct is to be franchised out to the private sector. [479]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* The Department does not have any plans to franchise NHS Direct to the private sector. A new organisational form for NHS Direct is being sought as part of the Department's review of arm's length bodies, of which NHS Direct is one. This will meet the needs of patients and the national health service.

NHS Staff (Assaults)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many reported violent incidents against NHS staff there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* each strategic health authority area, *(c)* each NHS trust and *(d)* each primary care trust, in each year since 1997. [228]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested was not collated centrally for the period 1997–99.

Reported violent or abusive incidents for 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 are shown in the following table.

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
England	84,214	112,000	116,000
National health service trust	83,058	106,000	94,000
Primary care trust (PCT)	—	6,000	21,000

Source:
Department of Health.

There are no published figures for strategic health authorities (SHAs).

The total figures for England differ from those by NHS trust and PCT, as these have been estimated and rounded to take into account nil returns.

A new national reporting system for physical assaults against NHS staff has been put in place. Information from this reporting system is expected to be available from summer 2005.

A table outlining the estimated number of reported violent incidents for 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03 for each SHA, NHS trust and PCT in England has been placed in the Library.

NHS Staffing

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the NHS takes to ensure the maintenance of adequate staffing levels. [568]

Mr. Byrne: The national health service ensures the maintenance of adequate staffing levels through local delivery plans. "Delivering the NHS Improvement Plan: the Workforce Contribution" highlights strategic workforce issues, which primary care trusts and strategic health authorities are asked to ensure are considered in their local delivery plans. This includes maintaining adequate staffing levels as well as achieving greater productivity.

Scottish Medicines Consortium

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether appraisals completed by the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) are considered by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) as evidence for the cost-and-clinical efficacy of a treatment; and whether approval of a treatment by the SMC which has not previously been approved by NICE can be used to fast-track the NICE appraisal so that the treatment can be recommended for use across England. [243]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) considers the full range of available evidence when conducting its technology appraisals. This is very likely to include evidence that has been considered by the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC).

The prior consideration of a treatment by the SMC does not in itself affect the process by which NICE conducts an appraisal.

Trafford Diagnostic and Treatment Centre

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many operations have been carried out at the Trafford Diagnostic and Treatment Centre since its opening; and what the unit cost has been. [182]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 24 May 2005]:* The Greater Manchester Surgical Centre began seeing patients on 9 May 2005 for pre-operative assessments. It carried out its first surgical list on 18 May.

Waiting Time Targets

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Department has agreed local delivery plans with strategic health authorities to monitor waiting times for diagnostic tests; and if she will make a statement. [244]

Mr. Byrne: The Department expects to agree local delivery plans with strategic health authorities in June 2005.

TRANSPORT

Aircraft Noise

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to measure trends in numbers of complaints related to aircraft noise at the UK's major airports; whether the Government have commenced implementation of EU Directive 2002/49/EC on noise mapping; and what measures the Government introduced to promote research and development into new low noise engine and airframe technologies. [797]

Ms Buck: Operational noise complaints (as distinct from representations about policy) are properly a matter for individual airports, many of which regularly publish their own summary statistics of complaints or enquiries. Any complaints received by the CAA or DfT are referred back to them. We do not operate a "complaints database". EU Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise is being implemented separately in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Public consultation has occurred or is on-going in all the Administrations. It is expected that regulations will be in force early next year, whereupon noise mapping will commence to meet the requirements of the directive.

The Government's commitment to supporting technological developments to address the environmental impact of air transport is recorded in The Future of Air Transport White Paper. The Government, in conjunction with the industry, have adopted stretching European targets (from the EC Advisory Council for Aerospace Research in Europe) for environmental performance of new aircraft and engines by 2020. We continue to maintain pressure for technological development through national strategy research support and through work in international fora.

Branch Line Rolling Stock

Chris Bryant: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what evaluation he has made of the reliability and quality of rolling stock on smaller branch lines. [432]

Derek Twigg *[pursuant to the reply, 24 May 2005, Official Report, c. 553]:* We monitor rolling stock reliability on all routes, including branch lines, to ensure that train reliability improvements play their part in achieving our target of 85 per cent. on-time performance across the network by 2006 with further improvements by 2008.

Bypasses

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his policy on the construction of bypasses; and which areas have submitted *(a)* proposals and *(b)* objections to proposals to him since 1997. [490]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government recognise the important role that bypasses can play in helping to reduce the volume of traffic passing through towns and villages and improving the quality of life for residents by relieving congestion, improving air quality and pedestrian safety, decreasing traffic noise and in some cases re-uniting severed communities. The programme of road schemes being taken forward by the Highways Agency and local authorities includes a number of bypass schemes which will bring real benefits to the communities that they relieve.

Between 1 January 1997 and 31 March 2005, the Secretary of State determined scheme orders for 45 bypasses which were submitted by local highway authorities to him for confirmation. These can be split into the following areas:

South-east (3),
South-west (4),
East Midlands (9),
West Midlands (11), Eastern (7),
North-west (3),
North-east (5), and
Yorks and Humber (3).

Of the 45, 38 were opposed and seven unopposed.

East Coast Route

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the level of capacity on the East Coast route between Kings Cross and Thirsk. [889]

Derek Twigg: Route capacity is dependent on a combination of train service pattern, type and speed. At the operational level, it is for Network Rail to allocate capacity under its licence from the Office of Rail Regulation, which regulates track access for existing and would-be operators. The Strategic Rail Authority has been considering the medium-term availability of capacity on the East Coast route and plan to publish a report summarising the work to date when responsibility for rail strategy transfers to the Department for Transport in late June.

East Midlands Airport

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received regarding the proposed development of facilities at Nottingham East Midlands airport. [753]

Ms Buck: None in recent months. The airport operator is currently preparing its master plan document, which will include an indication of its future development proposals. I understand that consultation on the draft master plan is to take place during the summer.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Committee for the establishment of conditions for the interoperability of the trans-European high-speed rail system, (ii) Committee on the adaptation to scientific and technical progress of legislation concerning the transport of dangerous goods and (iii) Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of recording equipment in road transport (tachographs) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [572]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is as follows:

(i) During the period in question, there were seven meetings of this Committee, held in Brussels, in October and December 2003, and in March, April, July, November and December 2004. The meetings were all attended by the Director, European Technical, SRA, supported where necessary by one other person from the UK industry or Government.

(ii) This Committee met in November 2003, April 2004 and November 2004 in Brussels. The Department for Transport was represented by officials of its dangerous goods branch.

(iii) There were no meetings of this Committee during the period in question.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Committee on the harmonisation of technical requirements and administrative procedures in the field of civil aviation and (ii) Committee on application of the legislation on access to the groundhandling market at community airports met; when and where these meetings took place; what Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [628]

Dr. Ladyman: There were no meetings of either of these Committees during the period in question.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Committee on the driving licence met, (ii) Advisory Committee on access for Community air carriers to intra-community air routes and (iii) Advisory Committee on the definition and use of compatible technical and operating standards and specifications for the procurement of air-traffic management equipment and systems met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [633]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is as follows:

(i) This Committee met four times during the period in question in Brussels, in July 2003, November 2003, March 2004 and November 2004. Officials from the Licensing, Roadworthiness and Insurance Division of the Department for Transport, and from the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) and the Driver and vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) attended as necessary.

(ii) This Committee met once during the period in question, in Brussels. The Department for Transport was not represented.

(iii) There were no meetings of this Committee during the period in question.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Committee on implementation of Protocol 9 to the Act of Austria concerning transport by road and rail and combined transport (Ecopoints), (ii) Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of roadworthiness tests of vehicles and (iii) Committee for a transparent system of harmonised rules for restrictions on heavy goods vehicles involved in international transport on designated roads met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [636]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is as follows:

(i) This Committee met on one occasion during the period in question, in September 2003 in Brussels. The Department for Transport was represented by an official of its Road Freight Operations Policy Division.

(ii) This Committee met in July 2003. The Department for Transport was represented by an official from its Licensing, Roadworthiness and Insurance Division. An advisor from the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) also attended.

(iii) There were no meetings of this Committee during the period in question.

EU Discussions

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list items of legislation within his responsibilities that are being discussed at European Union level. [459]

Dr. Ladyman: The following legislative proposals, within the responsibility of the Secretary of State, are currently being discussed under the co-decision process:

Amended proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EEC) No. 3922/91 on the harmonisation of technical requirements and administrative procedures in the field of civil aviation (EU-OPS)

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Community Air Traffic Controller Licence

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the rights of persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the information of air transport passengers on the identity of the operating carrier and on communication of safety information by member states

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the International Safety Management Code (ISM Code) within the Community

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of seafarers' certificates issued by the member states and amending Directive 2001/25/EC

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on ship-source pollution and on the introduction of sanctions for infringements

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on harmonised River Traffic Information Services on inland waterways in the Community

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 82/714/EEC of 4 October 1982 laying down technical requirements for inland waterway vessels

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 91/440/EEC on the development of the Community's railways

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the certification of train crews operating locomotives and trains on the Community's rail network

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on International Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on compensation in cases of non-compliance with contractual quality requirements for rail freight services

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on driving licences

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the harmonisation of certain social legislation relating to road transport and amending Council Regulations (EEC) No. 3821/85 and (EC) No. 2135/98

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum conditions for the implementation of Council Directive 2002/15/EC and of Council Regulations (EEC) Nos. 3820/85 and 3821/85 concerning social legislation relating to road transport activities

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 1999/62/EC on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures (Eurovignette)

Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on market access to port services

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the second "Marco Polo" programme for the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system ("Marco Polo II")

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the deployment and commercial operating phases of the European programme of satellite radionavigation.

EU Working Groups

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list European Union working groups to which his Department sends representatives. [458]

Dr. Ladyman: Officials of the Department for Transport attend meetings of the following Council Working Groups:

Land Transport
Aviation
Maritime Transport
Transport (Intermodal Questions)
Technical Harmonisation (Motor vehicles)

Graffiti (Motorway Bridges)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his policy on the removal of graffiti from motorway bridges. [487]

Dr. Ladyman: The removal of graffiti from motorway bridges is the responsibility of the Highways Agency. The agency's contractors make daily patrols to assess the problem and any obscene, blasphemous or offensive material is removed as soon as practicable after it has been observed. Non-contentious graffiti is removed at 12 month intervals or in combination with other work, where appropriate.

Where graffiti is persistent and widespread in environmentally sensitive areas, consideration is given to alternative solutions, other than frequent removal or obliteration. Possible strategies include involving local schools to raise awareness of the socially unacceptable nature of graffiti, and engaging with Neighbourhood Watch, local councils and the police more effectively in preventing graffiti. Physical measures include the use of anti-graffiti coatings.

Motorways

Mr. Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of motorway have been constructed in England and Wales since 1998; and at which locations. [405]

Dr. Ladyman: My Department holds the information for England only. The following table shows changes in the length of motorways in England that have been constructed since 1998. This excludes roads that have been reclassified as motorways and motorway widening schemes:

	Miles added	*Details of change*
1999	9.9	The northern end of the M1 was extended to link up with the A1(M), in the metropolitan borough of Leeds city council
2001	9.5	A new 9.5 mile stretch of the M60 was opened. This section of road (connecting junctions 18 to 24 of the M60) passes through the Greater Manchester metropolitan borough councils of Thameside, Oldham, Manchester city and Bury
2003	27	The M6 toll road opened. It runs to the north east of Birmingham, providing an alternative route to the M6 between Junction 4 and Junction 11

North East Regional Transport Board

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Regional Transport Board for the North East of England will be set up. [200]

Ms Buck: In the consultation document "Devolving decision making: a consultation on regional funding allocations" the Government indicated that they do not intend to prescribe how regions should coordinate and prepare advice on regional priorities. It will be for regional bodies in the North East of England to decide if they wish to establish a Regional Transport Board or make other arrangements. In reaching their views, regions will be able to draw on the experience of the experimental transport boards which were established in the South East and Yorkshire and Humberside last year.

Overseas Drivers

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he is taking to improve enforcement procedures against overseas drivers who infringe British traffic laws. [67]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government are strengthening the enforcement of the law against overseas drivers. The Road Safety Bill, introduced into Parliament on Tuesday 24 May, includes provisions designed to make it easier to take action against drivers who do not have a licence counterpart, which includes most foreign licence holders, by allowing enforcers to issue them with fixed penalty notices in respect of endorsable offences. At present they can only be dealt with by a court. We also propose to introduce a scheme of financial deposits in lieu of fixed penalties where a traffic offender cannot provide a verifiable United Kingdom address.

A Framework Decision under Article 31 of the Treaty of the European Union for the mutual recognition of financial penalties has also now been adopted, and provides for the transmission between member states of fines imposed on foreign drivers and the mutual enforcement of such fines in the relevant member state.

Road Congestion/Construction

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the levels of *(a)* motorway and *(b)* trunk road congestion were in each year since 1997. [465]

Dr. Ladyman: The measure that has been used is derived from comparing actual traffic speeds with those that would be achievable in the absence of congestion. Full details of the methodology are available on the Department's website at www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft transstats/documents/page/dft transstats 021863.pdf

Under this measure, the estimated average congestion vehicle delay in 2000 in England was 3.8 seconds lost per vehicle kilometre (sec/vkm) on motorways, 4.5 sec/vkm on dual carriageway A roads and 4.7 sec/vkm on single carriageway A roads.

These are the latest figures currently available. The Department is currently developing new, more detailed data sources and new measures of traffic congestion which will provide the basis for new targets to be set in July 2005.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list *(a)* historical and *(b)* archaeological sites that have been subject to (i) appeals against road construction and (ii) emergency excavation in road construction since 1997; and if he will list those where the road encroachment was authorised. [489]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no historical or archaeological sites on the motorway and trunk road network that have been subject to appeals against road construction or emergency excavation since 1997. Local roads are the responsibility of the respective local highway authority and we, therefore, do not retain records of this nature.

Speeding

Mr. Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which counties in England and Wales do not offer motorists caught speeding the option of taking a speed awareness course; what plans he has to increase the availability of such courses; and if he will make a statement. [406]

Dr. Ladyman: The eight police forces in England listed as follows currently run speed awareness courses, offering them to drivers where they judge this to be an appropriate alternative to prosecution. The Association of Chief Police Officers is putting in place arrangements for a national programme, including guidance to ensure consistent and rigorous standards, and plans to launch this initiative later in the year. The Government welcome this move, which will help make drivers more aware of speed and its effects, rather than simply punishing them.

Lancashire

Staffordshire

Humberside

Gloucestershire

Northamptonshire

Lincolnshire

Thames Valley

Avon and Somerset

Temporary Speed Limits

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which organisation has responsibility for determining temporary speed limits in the event of a motorway accident; at what level of seniority in that organisation the decision is made; what monitoring is undertaken by his Department of the level at which such limits are set and the duration for which they apply; and if he will make a statement. [647]

Dr. Ladyman: In the event of a motorway accident the responsibility for determining temporary speed limits lies with the police. Temporary speed limits are normally set by the police control room but these speed limits, which are in any case advisory, are able to be changed by the senior officer at the scene of the accident, who may request that control room staff alter speed limits. On the M25 between junctions 10 and 16 the temporary speed limit signs are set automatically in response to sensors in the road which detect traffic speed. The signs, on this section of controlled motorway, are mandatory. Data on the level at which speed limits are set and the duration for which they are applied are recorded and available.

Thameslink

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of Thameslink 2000. [746]

Derek Twigg: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for North Southwark and Bermondsey (Simon Hughes) on 23 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 12W.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future franchise for Thameslink services serving Mill Hill and Hendon. [747]

Derek Twigg: Shortlisted bidders for the replacement Thameslink and Greater Northern franchise were announced on 1 April 2005. Invitations to Tender will be issued to bidders in June. The strategy for this route was set out in the Midland Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy which was published by the Strategic Rail Authority in March 2004.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the new timetable for Thameslink services for Mill Hill, with particular reference to the ending of the fast train service from Mill Hill to central London. [748]

Derek Twigg: Thameslink has developed a new summer 2005 timetable that will be introduced in June. I understand that semi-fast trains on the route will stop at Radlett, Elstree and West Hampstead.

UK Merchant Marine

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the size of the UK merchant marine was by *(a)* tonnage and *(b)* number of ships (i) in the last period for which figures are available and (ii) 20 years ago. [793]

Dr. Ladyman: The tonnage and number of trading vessels of 500 gt and over registered in the UK at the end of 1984 and 2004 were as follows:

	End 1984[1]	*End 2004*
Gross tonnage (thousand)	14,312	10,221
Deadweight tonnage (thousand)	21,970	10,499
Number	777	486

[1] Includes vessels registered in the Crown Dependencies

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* officers and *(b)* seamen were serving in the merchant marine (i) in the last year for which figures are available and (ii) 20 years ago. [794]

Dr. Ladyman: Estimates of the number of UK merchant navy officers and ratings are as follows:

	1984	*2004*
Officers	17,000	15,800
Ratings	19,800	9,600
Total	36,800	25,400

Notes:

1. Officer and ratings estimates comprise deck, engine, technical and hotel/catering grades. Cadets are excluded.
2. Estimates for 1984 are from the Merchant Navy Establishment register of seafarers. They include some seafarers on the register who were not actively working at sea.
3. Estimates for 2004 are taken from "UK Seafarer Statistics", published by DfT.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the political situation in Burma. [875]

Ian Pearson: We remain deeply concerned by the situation in Burma, including the terrorist attacks on 7 May in Rangoon which led to at least 19 deaths and many more injured. The EU Troika, including the United Kingdom, expressed concern over the situation in Burma to the Burmese Foreign Minister in Kyoto on 6 May. On 16 May our ambassador in Rangoon drew the attention of the Burmese Foreign Minister to the level of concern in both Houses. We continue to believe that it is essential for the State Peace and Development Council to enter into a genuine and constructive dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy, other legitimate representative bodies and the ethnic groups to promote a peaceful, negotiated and democratic solution to the ongoing problems in Burma.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the condition of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience held in Burma. [876]

Ian Pearson: The UK and the EU have repeatedly called for the release of all political prisoners in Burma. When the EU Troika, including the United Kingdom, met the Burmese Foreign Minister in Kyoto on 6 May, they handed over a list of 19 political prisoners whose release the EU requested on urgent humanitarian grounds. On 16 May our ambassador in Rangoon reminded the Burmese Foreign Minister of the importance we attach to the release of prisoners on this list, and of the level of concern in both Houses over the situation in Burma and abuse of human rights.

We are concerned that, despite the release of a few political prisoners in recent months, arrests for political reasons have continued. In particular, we are concerned by the detention in February of a number of Shan leaders including Khun Htun Oo, Sai Nyunt Lwin and Sai Hsoten, who are being tried in secret in Insein Jail, without contact with their families, and who have been unable to appoint a lawyer of their own choosing. Furthermore we are concerned by the arrests during the last two months of elected representatives U Kyaw Hsan, U Kyaw Min, U Saw Hlaing and U Kyaw Khin, since these arrests all appear to be politically motivated.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the French Government regarding Total Oil's investment in Burma. [877]

Ian Pearson: There have been no recent ministerial discussions with the French Government on Total Oil's investment in Burma. Our embassy in Paris remains in regular contact with the French Government over the human rights situation in Burma.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what recent discussions have taken place at the United Nations regarding the situation in Burma; [878]

(2) if he will make representations for the situation in Burma to be made an agenda item for the next meeting of the UN Security Council. [879]

Ian Pearson: There are regular discussions in the United Nations on the situation in Burma. Most recently, the UK was centrally involved in the EU's negotiation of resolutions on the human rights situation in Burma at last year's UN General Assembly and this year's Commission on Human Rights. Adopted by the UN in December 2004 and March 2005 respectively, these resolutions condemned the many human rights abuses being committed in the country.

At present, there is no consensus for bringing Burma before the UN Security Council. But there is occasional informal discussion of the situation in Burma among security council members.

We will remain in close touch with all interested UN member states. We are also in close and frequent contact with the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Burma and his staff.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what discussions he has had with the Government of Burma regarding the use of chemical weapons against Karenni people in eastern Burma; [880]

(2) what assessment he has made of reports of the use of chemical weapons by the Burma Army against Karenni people in eastern Burma. [881]

Ian Pearson: Our ambassador in Rangoon raised the allegations of the use of chemical weapons with the Burmese Foreign Minister on 16 May 2005.

We treat any allegations of chemical weapons use with the utmost concern. We have examined the information that has been sent to us to date to support these recent claims and have also discussed them with international partners, but at this stage we do not believe that there is enough evidence to warrant further action. We continue to follow the situation carefully and remain ready to consider any further evidence.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will *(a)* make representations to ASEAN to strip Burma of its chairmanship, *(b)* make it his policy not to participate in meetings with ASEAN under Burma's chairmanship and *(c)* urge ASEAN to suspend Burma. [887]

Ian Pearson: The terms of membership of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and decisions on its chairmanship are internal matters for its members. We are, however, concerned about Burma's forthcoming chairmanship of ASEAN in 2006. This prospect makes the need for change in Burma all the more pressing.

The UK attends EU-ASEAN meetings as a member of the EU. Decisions on attendance are taken by consensus in the EU. It is too early for the EU to take a decision on the approach it will take in July 2006.

We will continue to take advantage of our regular bilateral and multilateral contacts with all ASEAN nations to encourage substantive change in Burma; most recently, we did so at the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) Foreign Ministers meeting in Kyoto on 6–7 May. We have made clear that we wish to see real progress towards genuine democratisation in Burma, including the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners.

Consultants

Mr. Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which consultants have been employed by his Department in each of the last three years. [891]

Mr. Straw: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Annual expenditure on external consultants is published in the Department's Annual Reports, copies of which are in the Library of the House. The vast majority of the work undertaken for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office by consultants was associated with our major Information Communication Technology and Estate construction programmes.

Darfur

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made towards encouraging an end to impunity for those committing attacks against humanitarian workers in Darfur. [859]

Ian Pearson: We condemn the recent attacks against humanitarian workers in Darfur. Many of these attacks appear to be the result of opportunistic banditry and general lawlessness. The African Union mission in Darfur has made a positive impact on security in the areas in which it has deployed and we fully support its expansion as the best way of addressing the security situation in Darfur. We continue to make clear to the Government of Sudan that it is their responsibility to provide security for all their people, and to actively pursue those who breach the law. We have made clear to all parties that attacks against humanitarian workers are in violation of international humanitarian law and it is imperative that those responsible are brought to justice. UN Security Council Resolution 1591, adopted on 29 March, allows for sanctions to be brought against those who commit violations of international humanitarian or human rights law or other atrocities. And Resolution 1593, which we sponsored on 31 March, referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court. Both these Resolutions provide a means towards addressing the impunity which has been prevalent in Darfur to date; we will follow their impact closely.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports that the Government of Sudan continues to arm and supply the Janjaweed forces in Darfur. [860]

Ian Pearson: The report of the International Commission of Inquiry stated that, in the past, the Government of Sudan has armed and operated in close co-ordination with a number of militias in Darfur. The latest report by the UN Secretary-General states that the Government of Sudan has made some progress in reining in its allied militias, but has failed to prevent continuing acts of banditry and attacks on civilians by other armed groups. We continue to make clear to the Government of Sudan that it bears the primary responsibility for security in Darfur, and that it must rein in and neutralise these armed militias, as it committed to doing in the Abuja Security Protocol.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the UN Security Council's referral of the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court upon the behaviour of the Government of Sudan. [861]

Ian Pearson: The Government of Sudan appear to be taking the referral of the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC) seriously. Since UN Security Council Resolution 1593 referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court on 31 March, the UN Secretary-General has concluded, in his monthly report on the situation in Darfur in April, that there were no incidents of regular Government forces attacking either rebel groups or civilians, and that they had made no hostile use of aircraft. We understand that the Government have established a legal committee to study how it can co-operate with the ICC. We continue to press the Government, and all parties in Sudan, to address the problems within their own judicial system; to co-operate fully with the ICC; and to ensure that those responsible for crimes in Darfur are brought to justice.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports of a substantial military build-up by the Sudan government in West Darfur. [862]

Ian Pearson: The seasonal movement of cattle along established migratory routes is traditionally a cause of heightened tensions and insecurity in Darfur. The UN reports that both the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army are making efforts to address the issue of migration and we understand that the Government of Sudan has increased the presence of Sudanese armed forces and police in and around the migration routes. There are no reports of trouble arising from the increased force presence and herders appear to be using the migration routes without problem so far.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of when the African Union will be able to deploy a force of 7,000 to Darfur. [871]

Ian Pearson: At its 28 April meeting, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council decided to expand its monitoring mission in Darfur to over 7,700 personnel, including 1,560 civilian police. We welcome this decision, and have made clear our willingness to support the AU in undertaking it. The AU plans to carry out a staged deployment into all eight sectors, with a view to full deployment by the end of September.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the current size of the African Union force in Darfur. [872]

Ian Pearson: There are currently over 2,500 African Union personnel deployed in Darfur, out of a planned total of 3,320. The majority of the shortfall is in numbers of civilian police. We are working to support the African Union in getting this phase of the mission deployed and fully operational as quickly as possible, ahead of the planned expansion to over 7,700 personnel by the end of September.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the death toll, including deaths as a result of violence, in Darfur. [873]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew) on 24 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 68W.

Northern Cyprus

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had on the lifting of import duties on goods exported to other parts of the EU from Northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement. [121]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's recent discussions on trade with north Cyprus have been in the context of the determination, as set out by EU Foreign Ministers at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 26 April 2004, to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community.

This commitment is embodied in two proposed regulations. The first would enable the disbursal of €259 million aid for north Cyprus. The second would enable preferential direct trade between north Cyprus and the rest of the EU. The Government discusses these proposals regularly at senior official level with EU partners, the Commission and parties on the island, and the Foreign Secretary last discussed ending the isolation of the north with the Turkish Foreign Minister in March. The EU has yet to reach agreement on these regulations.

The Government believe that direct trade will reduce the economic disparity between the north and south of the island and will help the Turkish Cypriots to raise standards towards EU norms. Narrowing the economic divide between the north and south will remove a major obstacle to a future settlement to the Cyprus problem. We therefore call upon all EU partners and the Commission to co-operate to find a way to fulfil the EU's commitment to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots.

Sudan (Peace Talks)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Sudan regarding the forthcoming peace talks in Abuja. [874]

Ian Pearson: A regional Heads of State Summit on Darfur held in Libya on 16–17 May announced that the talks would restart in Abuja by 1 June. However, the rebels were not present at that summit, and their agreement to this date is not yet clear. We have made regular representations to the Government of Sudan about the need to engage fully and at a high level at the next round of the Abuja peace talks. We continue to press the Government on the need to fully abide by their commitments under the existing Abuja agreements. A UK representative will attend the talks and offer support to the African Union mediators.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

E-government

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make it her policy for all legislation for which her Department has responsibility to be available online. [789]

Harriet Harman: It is my Department's policy to make all relevant information available via its website as a matter of course unless that information should more correctly be published elsewhere online. For example, Acts of Parliament are published by HMSO. In these latter cases, my Department's policy is to provide links from its website to the information.

General Election (Costs)

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the estimated cost was to public funds of administering the general election in 2005. [94]

Harriet Harman: We estimate that the cost to the consolidated fund of administering the 2005 general election in England and Wales will be approximately £71 million. Of this, £43 million will cover the costs of returning officers and £28 million will cover the costs of the delivery of candidates' election communications.

International Private Law

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the Government's policy on the accession of the EU to the Hague Conference on International Private Law. [448]

Harriet Harman: The Government supports the application by the European Community to become a full member of the Hague Conference on Private International Law. This reflects the increasing amount of Community law in this field and the need to ensure that the Community continues to play a full and constructive role in the work of the Conference. The United Kingdom's support for this application is consistent with our support for the Conference and the valuable work which it undertakes. There have already been encouraging negotiations on this matter in the Hague; these will be resumed at a further meeting in June at which the Government hopes that they will be successfully concluded.

Marked Electoral Registers

Mr. Allen: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will take steps to ensure that hon. Members can receive an electronic copy of the marked electoral register for their constituency. [531]

Harriet Harman: Access to the marked electoral registers is the responsibility of the Clerk of the Crown. The marked register which is made available for inspection or copying is the paper copy of the register kept at the polling station, and marked by polling station staff. No electronic copies are compiled, and we have no current plans to provide for it. Paper copies may be purchased, as has been the case in previous elections.

Parliamentary Campaigns (Use of Children)

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will bring forward legislative proposals to make it an offence for candidates for parliamentary elections to use children in their election addresses where the children are shown wearing uniforms of schools they do not attend and where the school in question has not given permission. [654]

Harriet Harman: The Government have no plans to introduce legislation covering these specific circumstances. Section 91 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, currently provides that material used in election addresses should relate to the election only. The Government believe that the Representation of the People Act 1983, along with the existing laws governing publications and copyright already cover possible complaints about the contents of election addresses. As a matter of principle, the Government do not believe that it would be appropriate to prescribe too closely what candidates may or may not include in their election communications.

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which judges are ticketed to try rape on the south eastern circuit. [584]

Harriet Harman: The following circuit judges on the south eastern circuit are ticketed to try rape:

His Hon Judge Michael Addison
His Hon Judge Peter Ader
His Hon Judge John Altman
His Hon Judge Anthony Ansell
Her Hon Judge Shirley Anwyl QC
His Hon Judge Edward Bailey
His Hon Judge Christopher Ball
His Hon Judge Anthony Balston
His Hon Judge Simon Barham
His Hon Judge Brian Barker QC
Her Hon Judge Shani Barnes
His Hon Judge Robin Barratt
Recorder of London
Peter Beaumont QC
His Hon Judge John Bevan QC
Her Hon Judge Christian Bevington
His Hon Judge Inigo Bing
His Hon Judge Martin Binning Esq

His Hon Judge Henry Blacksell QC
His Hon Judge Graham Boal QC
His Hon Judge Geoffrey Breen
His Hon Judge Richard Brown
His Hon Judge John Bull QC
His Hon Judge Jeffrey Burke QC
Her Hon Judge Lindsay Burn
His Hon Judge Charles Byers
His Hon Judge Andrew Campbell
His Hon Judge Quentin Campbell
His Hon Judge Jeremy Carey
His Hon Judge Michael Carroll
Her Hon Judge Marie Catterson
His Hon Judge Roger Chappie
His Hon Judge Philip Clegg
His Hon Judge Nicholas Coleman
His Hon Judge Helzet Colgan
His Hon Judge Paul Collins
His Hon Judge Simon Coltart
His Hon Judge Christopher Compston
His Hon Judge Roger Connor
His Hon Judge Peter Copley
His Hon Judge Thomas Corrie
His Hon Judge Seddon Cripps
His Hon Judge Christopher Critchlow
His Hon Judge John Crocker
His Hon Judge Philip Curl
His Hon Judge Patricia Dangor
His Hon Judge Peter de Mille
His Hon Judge John Devaux
His Hon Judge Paul Dodgson
His Hon Judge Paul Downes
His Hon Judge Hubert Dunn QC
His Hon Judge David Ellis
His Hon Judge Charles Elly
His Hon Judge Christopher Elwen
His Hon Judge Fabyan Evans
Her Hon Judge Diana Faber
His Hon Judge Michael Findlay Baker QC
His Hon Judge Paul Focke QC
His Hon Judge Giles Forrester
Her Hon Judge Dawn Freedman
Her Hon Judge Ann Goddard QC
His Hon Judge Gerald Gordon
His Hon Judge Joseph Gosschalk
His Hon Judge Andrew Goymer
His Hon Judge Charles Gratwicke
His Hon Judge Alan Greenwood
His Hon Judge Peter Grobel
His Hon Judge Julian Hall
Her Hon Judge Susan Hamilton QC
His Hon Judge Robert Hardy
His Hon Judge Michael Harris
His Hon Judge Charles Harris QC
His Hon Judge Gareth Hawkesworth
His Hon Judge Richard Hawkins
His Hon Judge Jonathan Haworth
His Hon Judge Richard Haworth
His Hon Judge Richard Hayward
His Hon Judge Richard Hayward-Smith QC
His Hon Judge Alan Hitching
His Hon Judge John Holt
His Hon Judge Richard Hone QC
His Hon Judge Michael Hucker
Her Hon Judge Judith Hughes
His Hon Judge Derek Inman
His Hon Judge Austin Issard-Davies
His Hon Judge Peter Jacobs
His Hon Judge Nicholas Jones
His Hon Judge Cedric Joseph
His Hon Judge Ian Karsten QC
His Hon Judge Sam Katkhuda
His Hon Judge Charles Kemp
His Hon Judge William Kennedy
His Hon Judge Anthony King
His Hon Judge Timothy King
Her Hon Judge Patricia Knowles
His Hon Judge Stephen Kramer QC
His Hon Judge Timothy Lawrence
His Hon Judge Michael Lawson QC
His Hon Judge Crawford Lindsay
His Hon Judge Nicholas Lorraine Smith
His Hon Judge Jonathan Lowan
His Hon Judge Shaun Lyons
His Hon Judge Kenneth Macrae
His Hon Judge Terry Maher
His Hon Judge James Mahoney
His Hon Judge Freddy Marr-Johnson
His Hon Judge David Martineau
Her Hon Judge Susan Matthews
Her Hon Judge Vera Mayer
His Hon Judge Andrew McDowall
His Hon Judge Richard McGregor-Johnson
His Hon Judge Bruce McIntyre
His Hon Judge Rodney McKinnon
His Hon Judge Warwick McKinnon
His Hon Judge Nicholas Medawar
His Hon Judge David Mellor
His Hon Judge Geoffrey Mercer
His Hon Judge Christopher Mitchell
His Hon Judge Fergus Mitchell
Her Hon Judge Angelica Mitchell
His Hon Judge David Mitchell
His Hon Judge David Mole QC
His Hon Judge Anthony Morris QC
His Hon Judge David Morton Jack
His Hon Judge Christopher Moss
His Hon Judge Ronald Moss
Her Hon Judge Mary Mowat
His Hon Judge Tim Nash
His Hon Judge Anthony Niblett
His Hon Judge Philip Norris QBE
His Hon Judge David Paget QC
His Hon Judge Andrew Patience QC
Her Hon Judge Valerie Pearlman
His Hon Judge Nicholas Philpot

His Hon Judge Deva Pillay
His Hon Judge David Pitman
His Hon Judge Anthony Pitts
His Hon Judge Jonathan Playford
Her Hon Judge Isobel Plumstead
His Hon Judge Tim Pontius
His Hon Judge Simon Pratt
His Hon Judge John Price
His Hon Judge David Radford
His Hon Judge Robert Reid QC
His Hon Judge David Rennie
His Hon Judge Martin Reynolds
His Hon Judge David Richardson
His Hon Judge Geoffrey Rivlin QC
His Hon Judge Stephen Robbins
His Hon Judge Mervyn Roberts
His Hon Judge Jeremy Roberts QC
His Hon Judge William Rose
His Hon Judge John Samuels
His Hon Judge Roger Sanders
His Hon Judge Anthony Scott-Gall
His Hon Judge John Sessions
His Hon Judge Alan Simmons
His Hon Judge Keith Simpson
His Hon Judge Stuart Sleeman
His Hon Judge C.M. Smith QC
Her Hon Judge Zoe Smith
His Hon Judge Simon Smith QC
His Hon Judge Edward Southwell
His Hon Judge Stanley Spence
His Hon Judge Philip Statman
His Hon Judge Martin Stephens QC
Her Hon Judge Linda Stern QC
His Hon Judge Neill Stewart
His Hon Judge Gregory Stone
His Hon Judge Timothy Stow QC
His Hon Judge John Tanzer
Her Hon Judge Susan Tapping
His Hon Judge Peter Testar
His Hon Judge Bill Thomas
His Hon Judge Peter Thompson
His Hon Judge Anthony Thorpe
His Hon Judge Charles Tilling
His Hon Judge David Turner QC
His Hon Judge Christopher Tyrer
His Hon Judge Jonathan Van der Werff
His Hon Judge James Wadsworth QC
His Hon Judge Richard Walker
His Hon Judge Stephen Waller
His Hon Judge Anthony Webb
His Hon Judge Charles Welchman
His Hon Judge Simon Wilkinson
Her Hon Judge Adele Williams
His Hon Judge Robert Winstanley
Her Hon Judge Suzanna Woollam
His Hon Judge Daniel Worsley
His Hon Judge Michael Yelton
His Hon Judge Martyn Zeidman QC
His Hon Judge Kenneth Zucker QC

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether any judge had his or her ticket to try rape withdrawn during *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [585]

Harriet Harman: The withdrawal of a rape authorisation is decided by the Lord Chief Justice personally. In 2003 and 2004 no authorisations were withdrawn.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs by what criteria judges in the Court of Appeal Criminal Division are selected to hear rape appeals. [594]

Harriet Harman: Judges who sit in the Criminal Division of the Court of Appeal can hear the full range of cases dealt with in this jurisdiction, including rape appeals.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether High Court judges have to be ticketed to try rape. [596]

Harriet Harman: A ticketing system is not operated for Queen's Bench Division Judges of the High Court who try rape, but any Queen's Bench Division Judge who does so is required to have attended the Serious Sexual Offences Seminar (SSOS) run by the Judicial Studies Board before they can sit on such cases.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which circuit judges on the north eastern circuit are licensed to try rape and serious sexual offences. [614]

Harriet Harman: The following circuit judges on the north eastern circuit are licensed to try rape and serious sexual offences:

His Hon Judge Peter Armstrong
His Hon Judge Trevor Barber
His Hon Judge Robert Bartfield
His Hon Judge Peter Benson
His Hon Judge David Bentley QC
Her Hon Judge Beatrice Bolton
His Hon Judge Peter Bowers
His Hon Judge Anthony Briggs
His Hon Judge David Bryant
His Hon Judge John Bullimore
His Hon Judge Bryan Bush
Her Hon Judge Sally Cahill QC
His Hon Judge Maurice Carr
Her Hon Judge Annabel Carr QC
His Hon Judge Michael Cartlidge
His Hon Judge John Cockroft
His Hon Judge Tom Cracknell
Her Hon Judge Jacqueline Davies
His Hon Judge Ian Dobkin
His Hon Judge John Dowse
His Hon Judge Esmond Faulks
His Hon Judge Peter Fox QC
Recorder of Sheffield Alan Goldsack QC
His Hon Judge Rodney Grant
His Hon Judge Simon Grenfell

His Hon Judge Stephen Gullick
His Hon Judge Simon Hawkesworth QC
His Hon Judge Tim Hewitt
Recorder of Newcastle David Hodson
His Hon Judge Paul Hoffman
His Hon Judge Leslie Hull
His Hon Judge Peter Hunt
His Hon Judge Simon Jack
His Hon Judge Norman Jones QC
His Hon Judge Geoffrey Kamil
His Hon Judge Roger Keen QC
His Hon Judge Anthony Lancaster
His Hon Judge Simon Lawler QC
His Hon Judge Richard Lowden
Her Hon Judge Kerry MacGill
His Hon Judge Alastair McCallum
His Hon Judge Michael Mettyear
His Hon Judge John Milford QC
His Hon Judge George Moorhouse
His Hon Judge Michael Murphy QC
His Hon Judge John Reddihough
His Hon Judge Patrick Robertshaw
His Hon Judge Roger Scott
His Hon Judge James Spencer QC
His Hon Judge Shaun Spencer QC
His Hon Judge Leslie Spittle
His Hon Judge James Stewart QC
Her Hon Judge Linda Sutcliffe
His Hon Judge Michael Taylor
His Hon Judge Roger Thorn QC
His Hon Judge John Walford
His Hon Judge Christopher Walton
His Hon Judge Guy Whitburn QC
His Hon Judge John Wolstenholme
His Hon Judge David Wood

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what criteria are applied to the decision on whether to ticket a judge to try rape; and who applies them in an individual case. [615]

Harriet Harman: The authorisation of individual circuit judges to try rape and other serious sexual offences is made by the senior presiding judge on behalf of the Lord Chief Justice. Such judges are identified by the presiding judges of each circuit. Before being authorised a judge must have wide and significant experience of the criminal justice system, and must have demonstrated the necessary sensitivity for these cases. Specialist training is provided for each authorised judge by the Judicial Studies Board and it is a condition that the judge must attend before he can sit on such cases.

I would refer the hon. Member for Redcar to my answer to her earlier question for the position in relation to High Court Judges.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many of the judges who sit on criminal cases in the Court of Appeal Criminal Division had previously been ticketed to try rape trials. [616]

Harriet Harman: All circuit judges who now sit in the Court of Appeal Criminal Division (CACD) are authorised to try rape. High Court Judges who sit in the CACD do not need to be ticketed to hear rape appeals. In relation to this point I would refer the hon. Member for Redcar to my answer to the earlier question from the hon. Member. Some of the Lords Justices who currently sit in the CACD will also have attended the Serious Sexual Offences Seminar (SSOS) whilst they were High Court Judges because it would have been compulsory for them to do so. It is unlikely that any constitution of the CACD that considers a rape appeal would not include at least one member who has attended the SSOS.

UK Judges (European Courts)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list UK judges eligible to sit in European courts; and if she will list *(a)* EU-funded courses in which they have participated and *(b)* EU grants which their chambers have received. [495]

Harriet Harman: The UK members of the European courts are as follows:

European Court of Justice:

Lord Justice Konrad Schiemann (member of the Court)
Francis Jacobs QC (Advocate-General)
Nicholas Forwood QC (member of the Court of First Instance)

European Court of Human Rights

Sir Nicholas Bratza

The Government do not hold the information requested in points *(a)* and *(b)*.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Yemen

8. **Keith Vaz**: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on bilateral aid to Yemen. [709]

Mr. Thomas: From 1997 until 2003, DFID's bilateral aid programme was approximately £2 million per annum. The programme allocation has risen steadily over the last three years in recognition of Yemen's major poverty challenge: £4 million in financial year 2003–04, £5.7 million in 2004–05 and £12.6 million in 2005–06.

Our current priorities include improving basic education services, support for the Government of Yemen's Social Development Fund, and helping the Government to develop a new poverty reduction strategy.

Sri Lanka

9. **Simon Hughes**: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support his Department plans *(a)* for Sri Lanka generally and *(b)* for the Tamil north and east parts of Sri Lanka in 2005–06. [710]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is supporting programmes to help develop and implement a National Education Plan, and to support the livelihoods of people displaced by the civil war. We also provide support through UNICEF, OXFAM and Save the Children programmes.

Following the tsunami we provided some £7 million of immediate emergency relief. We are also providing debt relief over the next 10 years worth at least £40 million.

DFID contributed to the assessment of post-tsunami reconstruction needs, including in the north and east. The Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are currently negotiating to establish a joint mechanism to channel donor funds to the areas controlled by the LTTE. We will consider further support for tsunami recovery, including in the north and east, in the light of Government's plans, and once the joint mechanism has been formalised.

G8 (International Development)

10. **Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what criteria the Government will use to measure the extent to which the conclusions reached at the G8 meeting in July meet the Government's goals for international development. [711]

Hilary Benn: DFID is working closely with other Departments to develop the UK's G8 presidency strategy.

On Africa, the UK is urging the G8 to show global leadership by agreeing a comprehensive plan of action, including increased resources for Africa through more and better aid and debt relief help to improve governance and build effective states and opportunities for economic growth, including more trade. On climate change, the UK is seeking to promote an international consensus on the need for further action to control emissions. At the summit, the UK wants to set out a clear understanding of the scale of the challenge and work in partnership with the major emerging economies to reach a new consensus on how we deal with this challenge in the future.

HIV/AIDS

11. **Mark Lazarowicz:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's approach to combating HIV/AIDS in the developing world. [712]

Mr. Thomas: The UK's strategy for tackling HIV and AIDS in the developing world, published in July 2004, sets out our comprehensive response which tackles prevention, treatment and care. We are prioritising the needs of women, young people and vulnerable groups and focusing [illegible] human rights and stigma and discrimination.

The Government have committed at least £1.5 billion to 2008 to intensify AIDS-related work in the developing world, ensuring that we invest at least £150 million to support the needs of orphans and other children, particularly in Africa, made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS.

We are calling on G8 partners to step up comprehensive action, including research and development of vaccines and microbicides. We are also calling on partners to make the money work by implementing the 3 Ones principles.

Global Poverty

12. **Mike Gapes:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on the elimination of global poverty. [713]

Hilary Benn: The Government are working with the international community to eliminate global poverty, through the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

We will use our Presidencies of the G8 and the European Union, to accelerate progress during 2005, especially in Africa, across three related areas. This will include; increased and more effective aid, particularly through promoting the International Finance Facility; fairer trade, including securing a better deal for developing countries; and on debt, by encouraging others to support a new multilateral debt relief initiative.

Balkans

13. **Mr. Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what initiatives his Department is undertaking in Balkan countries to build civil society. [714]

Mr. Thomas: Strengthening civil society is an important element of DFID's Western Balkans Regional Assistance Plan, particularly in development and implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategies, providing funding through the inter-department Global Conflict Pool; and providing £1.180 million support to NGO projects, through the Civil Society Challenge Fund.

Zimbabwe

14. **Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his assessment is of the food shortage in Zimbabwe. [715]

Hilary Benn: There has been no objective assessment of the recent harvest in Zimbabwe. Credible observers estimate a cereal shortage of approximately one million metric tonnes. Government food stocks and import plans are unknown. Although widespread starvation is unlikely, up to six million people could experience serious food shortages by the end of the year. We are supporting an £18 million Protracted Relief Programme to assist up to 1.5 million of the most vulnerable people in Zimbabwe. DFID, UN agencies and other donors are monitoring the situation closely and await clarity from the Government of Zimbabwe regarding their need for further assistance.

Ghana

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the incidence of AIDS in Ghana. [706]

Hilary Benn: In common with many developing countries, Ghana uses HIV/AIDS prevalence among 15 to 24-year-old women attending antenatal care as a proxy to measure HIV/AIDS incidence—that is, the rate of new HIV/AIDS infections.

Ghana's HIV/AIDS survey for 2004 reported that HIV/AIDS prevalence among 15 to 24-years-olds was 2.5 per cent., lower than any year since 2001. National prevalence was 3.1 per cent. in 2004, down from 3.6 per cent. in 2003. While encouraging, the improvements registered in 2004 are closely associated with an 83 per cent. increase in the number of antenatal testing sites in rural areas, where levels of infection tend to be lower.

TREASURY

Emigration

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of people who emigrated from the UK in each year from 1990 to 2004. [904]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. John Hemming, dated 25 May 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question regarding the number of people emigrating from the United Kingdom in each year since 1990. (904)

Estimates of emigration from the UK are shown in the attached table. The figures are based on the most comprehensive estimate of migration produced by the Office for National Statistics, "Total International Migration" (TIM), which is based on a number of sources. TIM estimates using the current methodology are only available from 1991 onwards and the latest estimates, for 2003, were published in the annual reference volume *International Migration, Series MN no. 30*, on the National Statistics website at the link below on 28th April 2005: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Product.asp?vlnk = 507

Total international migration[1]: United Kingdom—Emigration time series 1991 to 2003

Thousand

	Outflow (emigration out of the UK)—All citizenships
1991	285.0
1992	281.1
1993	266.3
1994	237.6
1995	236.5
1996	263.7
1997	279.2
1998	251.5
1999	290.8
2000	320.7
2001	307.7
2002	359.4
2003	361.5

[1] Data for 1991–2002 are based mainly on data from the International Passenger Survey. Includes adjustments for (1) those whose intended length of stay changes so that their migrant status changes; (2) asylum seekers and their dependants not identified by the IPS; and (3) flows between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Note:

A small weighting adjustment has been applied to IPS data for 1991 to 1998. This reflects the estimated effect of applying the weighting improvements made to IPS data from 1999 onwards.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Customs 2002 Committee, (ii) Committee for the application of the rules on the manufacture and placing on the market of certain substances used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and (iii) Committee on the movement of air or sea passengers' baggage (principles) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [553]

John Healey: The information requested is given as follows:

(i) The work of the Customs 2002 Committee was completed before the start of the presidencies in question.

(ii) Meetings of this Committee were held as follows, all in Brussels, under Commission chairmanship:

Italian presidency

29–30 September 2003, attended by the Home Office and the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS).

18 December 2003, attended by the Home Office, NCIS and HM Customs and Excise.

Irish presidency

19 April 2004, attended by the Home Office and NCIS.

Netherlands presidency

5 October 2004, attended by the Home Office, NCIS, and HM Customs and Excise.

16 December 2004, attended by the Home Office and NCIS.

(iii) The ad hoc committee relating to the baggage regulation has not met the last four years.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Customs Co-operation Subcommittee—EEC-Hong Kong, (ii) EEC—Mexico Special Committee on Customs Co-operation and (iii) Advisory Committee on the Communities' Own Resources met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [575]

John Healey: The information requested is given as follows:

(i) and (ii): These committees are run by the European Commission and we have no relevant information relating to them.

(iii) Advisory Committee on the Communities' Own Resources.

All meetings held in Brussels, as follows:

Italian presidency

2 July 2003,

20 November 2003 (VAT),

10 December 2003.

Irish presidency

20 April 2004 (Budget 2005).

Dutch presidency

21 October 2004 (VAT),

9 December 2004.

HM Customs and Excise were represented at each of these meetings except the meeting on 20 April 2004 where the UK was represented by HM Treasury.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Customs Code Committee—customs valuation, (ii) Customs Code Committee—customs warehouses and free zones and (iii) Customs Code Committee—customs procedures with economic impact met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [630]

John Healey: The information requested is as follows.

(i) Customs Code Committee—customs valuation

Italian presidency

3 July 2003

6 October 2003

Irish presidency

10–11 February 2004

21 April 2004

Dutch presidency

8 July 2004

1 October 2004

20 December 2004

(ii) Customs Code Committee—Customs warehouses and free zones

Italian presidency

18 September 2003

10 November 2003

Irish presidency

16–17 February 2004

28 April 2004

10 May 2004

16 June 2004

Dutch presidency

28 September 2004

26 November 2004

(iii) Customs Code Committee—economic impact

Information is not available at this stage.

All the meetings listed under (i) and (ii) were held in Brussels and were attended by officials of HM Customs and Excise.

Orkney and Shetland Businesses (Crown Estate)

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much businesses based in Orkney and Shetland have paid in rents to The Crown Estate in each of the last five years. [583]

John Healey: The total amount of rent paid to The Crown Estate from Orkney and Shetland over the last five years is as follows:

Financial year	£
2000–01	1,047,700
2001–02	998,900
2002–03	697,100
2003–04	730,100
2004–05	1,118,500
Total rents	4,592,300

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Coldeast Hospital Site

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his Department's plans for the Coldeast hospital site in Fareham. [736]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 24 May 2005]*: On 7 April 2004 my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Health announced an agreement in principle to transfer surplus non-operational NHS sites to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. On 1 April 2005 my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minster and Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the transfer of the first NHS sites. 67 vacant sites transferred to English Partnerships on 6 April 2005, including the Coldeast hospital site in Fareham.

The sites will be used to respond to housing needs, especially those presented by the first time buyer market and to promote the regeneration of priority areas in line with the sustainable communities plan. Specific proposals for individual sites will now be taken forward by English Partnerships in consultation with local partners including the local planning authority.

Development (Hertfordshire)

Mr. Walker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures he is taking to encourage the development of brownfield sites in Hertfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [839]

Yvette Cooper: Government policy set out in PPG3: Housing requires that all local planning authorities undertake an assessment of urban capacity in order to establish how much housing can be accommodated within urban areas. PPG3 also requires that regional planning bodies draw on such assessments in preparing draft revisions to regional spatial strategies and in proposing regional targets for the re-use of previously developed land. The level of development to be provided in Hertfordshire, its location and the balance between greenfield and brownfield development will be determined through the ongoing review of the regional spatial strategy for the east of England.

The Government have also introduced a greenfield direction which requires local planning authorities, that have not reviewed their development plans, to notify the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy

Prime Minister, of any planning application comprising five hectares or more of greenfield land or 150 dwellings or more on greenfield land which the local planning authority intends to permit.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures he is taking to protect Hertfordshire's green belt from further development; and if he will make a statement. [842]

Yvette Cooper: The Government place great importance on safeguarding the purposes and functions of the green belt. Government policy set out in PPG2: Green Belts requires that once the extent of green belt boundaries have been established they should only be altered by development plans in exceptional circumstances. The Government's representations on the east of England plan advise that the panel set up to conduct the examination in public will need to rigorously test whether those exceptional circumstances exist.

Housebuilding (Redcar)

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's requirement is for the number of houses to be built in Redcar in each of the next 10 years. [565]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not require houses to be built but rather directs local authorities to make housing provision in statutory planning documents detailed as follows.

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the north-east (adopted November 2002) allocated the Tees Valley an average rate of housing provision of 1,250 up to 2006 and 1,500 post 2006.

The Tees Valley Structure Plan (adopted February 2004) allocates this housing provision at district level; Redcar and Cleveland borough council's allocation is as follows:

Policy H1

	Number	
	Approximate	*Per annum*
2002–06	800	200
Post 2006	2,400	240

The Regional Spatial Strategy is currently being reviewed with an adoption date programmed for early 2007; once adopted this document will supersede the above documents.

Housing (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many houses have been sold under Right to Buy by each local authority in Gloucestershire since the inception of the scheme. [157]

Yvette Cooper: The numbers of council dwellings reported as sold under the Right to Buy scheme by each local authority in Gloucestershire up to the end of 2003–04 are as follows:

	Number
Cheltenham	3,158
Cotswold	2,151
Forest of Dean	2,805
Gloucester	2,561
Stroud	3,350
Tewkesbury	1,937

Source:

Quarterly council house sales returns (P1B) from local authorities.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people were on the housing register in each local authority in Gloucestershire in the last year for which figures are available. [158]

Yvette Cooper: Local authorities in England report the numbers of households on their housing waiting list (excluding tenants awaiting a transfer) as at 1 April in their annual Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return. Local authorities sometimes maintain a common waiting list with the housing association/s in their district. However, information is not held centrally where a housing association maintains a separate waiting list to the local authority.

The latest information, for 2004, is given as follows for the six districts in Gloucestershire:

Households on the housing waiting list at 1 April 2004

Local authority	*Number of households*
Cheltenham	3,620
Cotswold[1]	1,787
Forest of Dean	2,164
Gloucester[1]	3,934
Stroud	1,627
Tewkesbury[1]	1,623
Total	14,755

[1] Denotes that the local authority has a common waiting list with the Housing Association/s in their area.

Source:

ODPM's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many house completions of *(a)* social housing and *(b)* affordable housing there were in each local authority area in Gloucestershire in the last year for which figures are available. [159]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows social and affordable dwellings provided in each local authority area in Gloucestershire in 2004–05.

	Social housing dwellings provided	*Affordable housing dwellings provided*
Cheltenham	66	45
Cotswold	74	21
Forest of Dean	16	1
Gloucester	31	30
Stroud	12	15
Tewkesbury	42	17

Note:

Includes new build dwellings, acquisitions (including open market purchase e.g. existing Home Buy scheme) and dwellings completed for intermediate rent)

Source:

Housing Corporation

Ministerial Responsibilities

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* responsibilities and *(b)* role of the Minister of Communities and Local Government are. [355]

Jim Fitzpatrick: My right hon. Friend the Minister of Communities and Local Government was appointed to support my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister across the full range of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's activities.

Negative Subsidy

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what acreage of England lies under roads; and what percentage of land area this represents. [461]

Yvette Cooper: Latest available statistics for 2001 from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's generalised land use database (GLUD) for England show that 757,500 acres (306,500 hectares) of England lies under roads.

The GLUD definition of 'roads' also includes adjacent pedestrian footway i.e. 'pavements'.

This accounts for 2.3 per cent. of the total land area of England.

Neighbourhood Funding

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on plans to make available funds for local neighbourhoods to spend on local priorities. [282]

Mr. Woolas: No decisions have yet been made on the allocation of over £1 billion of new Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources for the period 2006–08. The Government is carefully examining the options available, in the light of responses to the recent consultation. An announcement on the allocations will be made as soon as possible once we have completed our consideration.

Parish Councils (London)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government has for the creation of parish councils in London; and if he will make a statement. [283]

Mr. Woolas: Following publication of the discussion document "Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter" on 31 January 2005 which indicated the Government's intention to seek to remove the existing barrier on urban parishes in London, our manifesto commits us to extend the right to establish parish councils to London communities.

Retail Precincts

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government makes available *(a)* grant aid and *(b)* other forms of support for the redevelopment of derelict retail precincts. [555]

Yvette Cooper: The Government provides financial assistance for a range of town/city centre regeneration initiatives, and this forms a key part of the work of English Partnerships, the Government's national regeneration agency, in pursuance of the Sustainable Communities Plan. English Partnerships is committed to the provision of mixed-use development rather than single use: the need for facilities, including retail, to support sustainable communities is recognised and retail provision is factored into many of its projects, including at the local level. The extent of funding availability from English Partnerships will depend on specific local circumstances and whether a particular project accords with English Partnerships' corporate priorities.

The redevelopment of derelict retail precincts would in general terms be eligible for support from the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) Single Programme (including Single Regeneration Budget). The appropriate regional development agency should be approached in the first instance: again, funding availability will depend on specific circumstances and the fit with RDA priorities.

The Government also supports the introduction of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to assist the delivery of high-quality town centre regeneration and enhance existing business environments, although this is not through large-scale capital funding. Government funding, together with assistance from private sector partners, has been provided through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the BIDs pilot research project, which looked to test the BIDs concepts in a number of locations around the UK. BIDs do not relate solely to retail centres, but many town and local centres do include a large retail element.

PRIME MINISTER

Rented Housing (London)

Q10. Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Prime Minister what plans the Government have to increase the supply of housing for rent by councils and housing associations in London. [725]

The Prime Minister: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is investing nearly £1.5 billion through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme in 2004–06 to provide over 21,000 affordable homes in London, of which 10,000 will be for affordable renting, 7,000 for key workers and 4,000 for low cost home ownership.

Antisocial Neighbours

Q12. John Mann: To ask the Prime Minister what plans he has to tackle antisocial neighbours. [728]

The Prime Minister: The Government have a wide ranging strategy to tackle antisocial behaviour. In order to help address the issue of antisocial neighbours, the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit at the Home Office has set up a National Nuisance Neighbour Expert Panel made up of experts from the police, local authority, social services, youth offending teams and the voluntary sector. The panel has heard over 120 cases. Feedback received indicates that in 66 per cent. of cases behaviour had improved and the problems curtailed as a result of the panel's intervention.

We have already seen significant successes in dealing with antisocial behaviour, as confirmed by the fall in the number of people who perceive it to be a significant problem (as reported by the British Crime Survey). During this Parliament, we will step up the work of the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, driving through cultural change in local communities especially in deprived areas. This will be a Government-wide programme, with the active support of a number of Government Departments.

Consultants

Mr. Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister which consultants have been employed by his Office in each of the last three years. [894]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Hutton) to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 26 May 2005

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

House Prices

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average house price was *(a)* in each local billing authority in England and *(b)* in England, in each year for which figures are available. [359]

Yvette Cooper: Estimates of median house prices at local authority level are only available back to 1996 and are based on Land Registry data. The figures for 1996 to 2004 are available from the Housing Statistics section on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) internet site.

These data are published on the ODPM website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_ house_609382.xls

Local Authority Cabinets

Bob Russell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice he has given to local authorities concerning councillors elected to two authorities holding Cabinet positions on both; and if he will make a statement. [1144]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has given no advice to local authorities specifically concerning councillors who hold Cabinet positions on two different authorities. Members are, however, required to follow the provisions of the code of conduct for Members, issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which sets out the standards of conduct expected of Members, and includes provisions relating to Members' personal and prejudicial interests.

Local Government Conduct

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will amend the local government code of conduct to incorporate a defence of acting in the public interest; and if he will make a statement; [1042]

(2) if he will undertake a review of the operation of the *(a)* Local Government Code of Conduct and *(b)* the Standards Board; and if he will make a statement. [1045]

Mr. Woolas: The Standards Board for England is currently consulting on a review of the code of conduct for Members. The review includes consideration of whether there is a case for the addition to the code of a provision which would allow Members to disclose certain information in the public interest. Any recommendations the Standards Board may wish to make for amendments to the code will be considered by Ministers.

The role and effectiveness of the Standards Board and the operation of the ethical framework for local government has recently been the subject of reviews by both the Committee for Standards in Public Life and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Select Committee. Both have published their findings, and the Government are considering its response to these reviews.

Local Government Finance

David Howarth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will rank local authorities by percentage increase in amount received in revenue support grant plus national non-domestic rates in the period from 1999–2000 to 2005–06. [1156]

Mr. Woolas: A table has been placed in the Library of the House showing the percentage change year-on-year on a like-for-like basis (i.e. after adjusting the base year for changes in the funding and functions of local authorities) of formula grant for the period 1999–2000 to 2005–06, together with the average percentage change over this period. Authorities have then been ranked by the average percentage increase over the period within class.

Formula grant consists of the sum of the following grants (where appropriate):

Revenue Support Grant;

Redistributed Business Rates;

Police Grant;

Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) Reduction Grant (SSA Review);

SSA Reduction Grant (Police Funding Review); and

Central Support Protection Grant.

SSA reduction Grant (SSA Review), SSA Reduction Grant (Police Funding Review) and Central Support Protection Grant were damping grants provided to protect authorities from year-on-year changes in Revenue Support Grant, Redistributed Business Rates and Police Grant. In 2001–02 Central Support Protection Grant was replaced by floor and ceiling damping within Revenue Support Grant for authorities with education and personal social services responsibilities. In 2002–03, floor and ceiling damping was extended to all authorities. Floor and ceiling damping refers to the increase year-on-year in formula grant.

As different classes of authorities provide different services it would be inappropriate to compare all authorities. Please note that the Combined Fire Authorities became precepting bodies in 2004–05, and therefore the average percentage increase in formula grant for these authorities refers to the two-year average for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

Local Government Reform

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the time scale is for the publication of further consultation papers on reform of local government. [363]

Mr. Woolas: Before the general election, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister set out a number of ideas on the future of local government, both in our five year plans, the initial local vision document and subsequent discussion papers on neighbourhoods, local leadership, and the performance framework. We are considering the best way of developing this work in light of the feedback so far and the ambitious programme of work in the manifesto.

Mobile Telephone Masts

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidelines mobile network providers have to follow to set up mobile telephone masts; what plans he has to review the guidelines; and whether mobile network providers have to consult nearby residents before installing masts. [577]

Yvette Cooper: Current planning guidance for all electronic communication developments is set out in planning policy guidance note 8 (revised) (PPG8). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also issued a code of best practice on mobile phone network development. The code provides detailed guidance on best practice for public consultation. In September last year the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister commissioned the University of Reading and Arup to undertake an independent study to assess the impact that the code has had since its introduction. This forms part of the Government's review of all the planning arrangements surrounding telecommunication masts.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

John Hemming: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have for the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. [982]

Mr. Woolas: In Spending Review 2004 (SR04), the Government made available over £1 billion of new Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources for the period 2006–08. No decision has yet been taken on how these resources will be allocated. The Government are carefully examining the options available, in the light of responses to the recent consultation with key stakeholders such as local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships. An announcement on the allocations will be made as soon as possible once we have completed our consideration.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum and Immigration

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applicants for refugee status he expects will be processed each year at the accommodation centre for asylum seekers at Bicester. [668]

Mr. McNulty: The total number of applicants processed annually will be dependent on the mix of asylum applicants but we expect it to be no less than 1,500.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many migrants claimed refugee status in each month in the last three years. [696]

Mr. McNulty: The table shows the number of asylum applications received in each month in the last three years.

Information on asylum applications is published quarterly. The next publication covering the second quarter of 2005 will be available in August 2005 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Applications[1] for asylum in the UK, excluding dependants, 2002-04

	Applications received
2002	
January	6,575
February	6,325
March	6,355
April	6,475
May	7,380
June	6,235
July	7,510
August	6,895
September	7,630
October	8,770
November	7,545
December	6,445
Total	84,130
2003[2]	
January	7,210
February	4,215
March	4,430
April	3,690
May	3,365
June	3,615
July	3,990
August	3,795
September	4,270
October	4,025
November	3,275
December	3,525
Total	49,405
2004[2]	
January	3,030
February	2,900
March	3,015
April	2,640
May	2,550
June	2,730
July	2,860
August	2,680
September	3,060
October	2,805
November	2,875
December	2,780
Total	33,930

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest 5.

[2] Figures are provisional.

Immigration

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects his office to reach a decision on the case of Ms Alexis Perreira in respect of her application for indefinite leave to remain in the UK. [416]

Mr. McNulty: A decision to regularise Ms Perreira's immigration status in the United Kingdom was taken on the 23 May 2005.

Stephen Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will issue a letter confirming her status to Mrs. Maliheh Sadeghi Boroujerdi, of Newcastle, following the decision of the Immigration

Appeal Tribunal of 2 February (appeal no. TH/07220/2004) not to grant the Secretary of State permission to appeal against the earlier decision of the adjudicator. [831]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 24 May 2005]:* Mrs. Boroujerdi's representative was contacted on 23 May to request the necessary documentation. Her status will be confirmed as soon as the correct documentation has been received.

Mr. Hugh Hickson

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the case of Mr. Hugh Hickson, formerly of the Prison Service, referred to in the letter of 4 April from the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State to the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton. [449]

Fiona Mactaggart: Mr Hickson took his grievance to an employment tribunal, which found against him in September 2004. There was no subsequent appeal to an employment appeals tribunal and it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the due process of law in this matter.

Police Service (Modernisation)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he plans to have with the Police Federation concerning a reform programme for the police service. [562]

Hazel Blears: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and I regularly meet the chair and other officials of the Police Federation to discuss all topics including police reform.

Police Vehicles

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many accidents involving police *(a)* pursuit and *(b)* patrol cars and drivers and members of the public resulting in serious injuries or death there were in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [99]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 24 May 2005]:* Accidents involving pursuit and patrol vehicles are not recorded separately. Figures for road traffic collisions are currently available from 2002–03.

The available information for the numbers of casualties and degree of injury from road traffic collisions resulting from immediate/emergency response and police pursuits on public roads involving all police forces in England and Wales is provided in the table.

Table 1: Casualties and degree of injury from road traffic collisions involving all Police Forces in England and Wales

Number of casualties/injuries

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Police Personnel		
Fatal	1	2
Serious	38	33
Members of Public		
Fatal	30	20
Serious	100	73

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many accidents involving *(a)* Kent police and *(b)* Metropolitan police (i) pursuit and (ii) patrol vehicles and drivers and members of the public resulting in serious injuries or death there were in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [100]

Andy Burnham: Accidents involving pursuit and patrol vehicles are not recorded separately. Figures for road traffic collisions are currently available from 2002–03.

The available information for the numbers of casualties and degree of injury from road traffic collisions resulting from immediate/emergency response and police pursuits on public roads involving Kent police and the Metropolitan police is provided in the table.

Casualties and degree of injury from road traffic collisions involving Kent police and the Metropolitan police

Number of casualties/injuries

	Kent		*Metropolitan*	
	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Police personnel				
Fatal	0	0	0	1
Serious	5	1	1	2
Members of public				
Fatal	0	0	4	4
Serious	1	2	19	13

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the delivery of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. [888]

Mr. Thomas: The UK has provided over £100 million in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan since 2001. Afghanistan is gradually moving from being a failed state with urgent humanitarian and relief needs, to a post-conflict state with a growing economy and new state structures in need of sustained support. In response to this process of slow stabilisation, and at the request of the Afghan Government, DFID is increasingly focusing on support to long-term reconstruction and development.

The UK continues to provide some targeted humanitarian support to Afghanistan through international agencies. In 2004–05, DFID gave £2.5 million to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and £0.5 million to the International Organisation for Migration to help Afghan refugees return to their homes. DFID contributed £3 million to the Afghan Government's drought appeal in September 2004, of which £0.7 million has been reallocated for flood protection following heavy rains in early 2005. Our support to cash for work programmes to help poppy farmers and labourers move to alternative livelihoods (over £20 million in 2005–06) also meets humanitarian needs.

DFID continues to provide substantial multi-annual support to the major multilateral organisations who deliver humanitarian assistance globally. A number of these, for example, the UNHCR and the United Nations Children's Fund, are still implementing major humanitarian programmes in Afghanistan.

Darfur

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action his Department has taken in response to the statement by the UN that a rapid deterioration of local coping mechanisms among the local population has taken place in Darfur. [865]

Hilary Benn: The World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that it will increase its target beneficiaries in Darfur from 2.1 million in April to between 3 and 3.5 million during the July-October hungry season as local coping mechanisms fail. This year as part of its £45 million contribution to humanitarian components of the UN 2005 Workplan for Sudan, DFID has provided £11 million to the WFP across Sudan and £1.2 million to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's programme to increase agricultural and pastoral production in Darfur. DFID has also contributed £5 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross, who are delivering food aid to 320,000 people in less accessible Darfur communities.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the physical security conditions for humanitarian operations in Darfur. [866]

Hilary Benn: While the security situation is relatively calm in Darfur, banditry is now the biggest security threat to humanitarian operations there. On several occasions during April, clearly marked humanitarian vehicles came under fire, causing the serious injury of one humanitarian worker and considerable damage. Intimidation of humanitarian workers including United Nations personnel throughout April was reported in the UN Secretary-General's April report to the Security Council. This has continued in May: in South Darfur, two truck drivers, contracted by the World Food Programme (WFP), were shot and killed by unidentified attackers on 8 May; and five Sudanese NGO workers were detained by the Sudanese Liberation Army on 11 May.

Developing Nations (Aid)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what mechanisms are in place to ensure co-ordination between countries which give aid to developing nations; and if he will make a statement. [522]

Hilary Benn: Donor co-ordination takes place at a number of levels: internationally, regionally and within partner countries. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is the main international forum for bilateral donors to discuss co-operation and increased effectiveness of development assistance. As well as annual high-level meetings for heads and deputy heads of development agencies, there are a number of working parties and groups dealing with specific subject areas.

The Paris High Level Forum in March this year brought together Ministers, heads of aid agencies and other senior officials from 60 partner countries, bilateral donors and the main multilateral institutions, to agree ways of making aid more effective. The Paris Declaration is the best statement yet of internationally agreed best practice on aid effectiveness with around 50 commitments, plus indicators and targets, to improve country ownership and donor harmonisation and alignment.

The EU also provides a mechanism to increase coordination and harmonisation among member states. Last year the EU agreed an Action Plan on Harmonisation which included measures to improve co-ordination of EU development assistance at country level. The World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) spring and annual meetings also provide an opportunity for donors to coordinate policy on aid and development.

There are also co-ordination mechanisms at regional level. For example the Strategic Partnership for Africa seeks to support poverty reduction in Africa by increasing the quality and quantity of aid.

At country level the World Bank led Consultative Groups review overall progress on poverty reduction and donor commitments to help governments achieve their poverty reduction objectives. The development of Poverty Reduction Strategy papers or similar national development strategies provides an opportunity for developing countries to coordinate donor support. In some countries partner governments lead donor co-ordination processes aimed at improving the overall coherence of donor support (for example, the Government of Tanzania are leading a joint assistance strategy). In some countries, donors have begun to undertake joint strategic planning. For example, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and DFID are developing a joint plan in Cambodia. There are also sector co-ordination processes in many countries particularly in health and education where many donors are present.

DFID is working hard to improve the effectiveness of co-ordination and to increase developing country voice at all these levels. A principal concern is that there is no international forum in which total aid allocations to each country are reviewed. We believe that this results in some countries consistently receiving less than their fair share of aid.

Yemen (Smallpox)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance he is proposing to provide to Yemen following the recent outbreak of smallpox. [551]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is unaware of a recent outbreak of smallpox in Yemen. However, there has been an outbreak of polio recently. As of 17 May, 66 cases had been confirmed (source World Health Organisation). Experts expect the total number of cases to exceed 100 before the outbreak is stopped. A nationwide immunisation campaign is due to get under way shortly with support from Saudi Arabia. Six million doses of vaccine have been shipped to Yemen. The Government of Yemen completed a mass information campaign in April.

DFID has not received any official requests for help to date.

TRANSPORT

A57/A628 (Traffic Levels)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the traffic levels were on the A628 and A57/A628 Mottram-Tintwistle by-pass in the last year for which figures are available; and what forecast has been made of likely future levels. [1233]

Dr. Ladyman: Annual average daily traffic levels for the A628 at Woodhead for the year 2004 were 11,900 vehicles per day. Construction has not yet started on the planned A57/A628 Mottram Tintwistle bypass. The Highways Agency expects construction work to start in 2007–08 subject to satisfactory completion of the statutory procedures and funding.

Projected annual average daily traffic levels for the A628 at Woodhead in 2023 are 12,600 vehicles per day without a bypass, and 20,000 vehicles per day with a bypass and route demand management measures, as the bypass will make the route attractive to road users.

A628

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions in each of the last five years the A628 has been closed as a result of accidents *(a)* in total and *(b)* involving heavy goods vehicles. [1234]

Dr. Ladyman: Information for the full five years requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost. Between July and December 2003, the A628 was closed once as a result of accidents, on five occasions during 2004, and once since January 2005. All of these closures involved HGV vehicles.

Motorways

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from road safety organisations regarding the prevalence of roadside signs alongside motorways. [1021]

Dr. Ladyman: My Department has not received any recent representations from road safety organisations about the prevalence of roadside signs alongside motorways.

Parking Spaces (London)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many parking spaces there are in central London in *(a)* street slots and *(b)* car parks. [462]

Ms Buck: Since 3 July 2000, the Mayor has had overall responsibility for traffic management in London. However, responsibility for parking enforcement in London generally rests with the relevant local authority. It is a matter for individual local authorities to decide on the nature and scope of parking controls and to balance the needs of residents, emergency services, local business and those who work and travel in the area.

While we do not hold any up to date figures, Transport for London's report, "Transport Statistics for London 2001", provides the following figures for parking spaces in central London in 1999–2000:

	Number of spaces
Public off-street car parks	25,000
Private non residential car parks	34,000
Sub-total	59,000
On-street controlled parking	14,000
On-street parking—unrestricted	11,000
On-street parking—single yellow lines	42,000
Sub-total	67,000

These figures are estimates only and are based on sample surveys undertaken in 1998.

Retro-reflective Tape

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will publish the study carried out by the Ergonomics and Safety Research Institute of Loughborough University on ECE 104 retro-reflective tape; and if he will make a statement. [1243]

Dr. Ladyman: The "Assessment of the safety benefit of retro-reflective markings on heavy goods vehicles and buses" research was completed at the end of February and the final report was issued by the Ergonomics and Safety Research Institute of Loughborough university on 18 May. It is available on the university's website at: www.lboro.ac.uk/research/esri/main/reports.htm and copies are being placed in the House Libraries. The review has up-dated our understanding of this issue and has indicated a more favourable cost benefit ratio, compared with earlier research, for the application of retro-reflective tape to some categories of vehicle. My Department is now considering how best—including wide consultation—to take this forward.

CABINET OFFICE

e-Government Unit

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans he has *(a)* to make more public services available online and *(b)* to develop the responsibilities of the e-Government unit. [550]

Mr. Jim Murphy: As reported in last year's Cabinet Office Autumn Performance report, 96 per cent. of Government services are estimated to be available electronically by the end of 2005, with 75 per cent. of services currently online.

The e-Government Unit will continue to work with central and local government to support the business transformation of Government so it can provide better, more efficient and trusted public services. Under the "Connecting the UK: the Digital Strategy" initiative, it is working with the newly-created Government CIO

Council to set out a vision of public service delivery enabled and delivered through technology, and a strategy to achieve that vision.

Copies of the Cabinet Office Autumn Performance report 2004, can be found at http://cabweb/cabwebpub/strategvandperformance/departmentalplansreportsreviews/df0020.htm and in the Library.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Boundary Changes

Mr. Allen: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Boundary Commission's proposals for parliamentary boundary changes will be implemented. [528]

Harriet Harman: Any changes to parliamentary boundaries in Wales arising from the Boundary Commission's report presented to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister on 31 January, will come into effect at the first proclamation summoning a new Parliament issued after the order implementing the changes comes into force. The final report of the Boundary Commission in relation to parliamentary boundaries in England has not yet been published.

Legal Aid Budget

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which 12 barristers received the most money from the *(a)* criminal legal aid budget and *(b)* civil legal aid budget in each of the last three years; how much each received in each year; and if she will make a statement. [1138]

Bridget Prentice: The information requested has to be extracted from different computer system across Legal Service Commission and my Department and collecting and collating that data will take some time. I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as the information is available.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which was the most expensive case for the *(a)* criminal and *(b)* civil legal aid budget in 2004–05; how much was paid by way of (i) brief fee and (ii) refreshers to each of the barristers concerned; how much was paid to each solicitors firm involved; who the (A) barristers and (B) solicitors were; and if she will make a statement. [1139]

Bridget Prentice: Payments relating to one specific case may be spread over a number of financial years and identifying those will take some time. I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as the information is available.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Analogue Switch-off

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the Government's time scale for switching off analogue television. [1163]

Tessa Jowell: We will achieve digital switchover between 2008 and 2012 ensuring universal access to high-quality, free-to-view and subscription digital TV. This will happen region by region, and we will make sure that the interests of elderly people and other vulnerable groups are protected.

Cinemas (Digital Subtitling)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps the Government are taking to support digital subtitling in cinemas. [925]

James Purnell: The UK Film Council, the Government's strategic agency for film, set up the Cinema Access Programme in September 2003 to improve disabled peoples' experiences of cinema. Through the programme, funding of £500,000 has been allocated to equip 78 cinemas with subtitling and audio description equipment (£350,000); develop a web-based information service to raise awareness of subtitled and audio-described screenings (£50,000); assist UK distributors with producing subtitled and audio-described film prints (£60,000); and conduct research into the ongoing needs of disabled audiences, both technically and in terms of awareness of available films and cinemas (£40,000). The programme has so far been rolled out only across England, as the funding is an initial allocation from Arts Council England. However, the UK Film Council is working with Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission, Scottish Screen and Sgrîn Cymru Wales to set up similar schemes.

Freeview

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the availability of Freeview in *(a)* Bexhill-on-Sea and the surrounding area and *(b)* the UK. [1162]

James Purnell: We do not have a breakdown of coverage by constituency but Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) coverage maps have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Freeview also provide a comprehensive postcode database (www.freeview.co.uk) that gives availability of DTT throughout the UK.

At least a quarter of UK households cannot currently receive the DTT service; this figure cannot be increased before switchover. The current availability of Freeview is particularly severely restricted in Bexhill-on-Sea, because of its proximity to continental Europe which means that, until switchover, the Heathfield transmitter can only broadcast digital signals at low strength.

London Eye

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions *(a)* she, *(b)* her Ministers and *(c)* her officials have had in the past six months with (i) the Chairman and (ii) representatives of the South Bank Centre in relation to the lease of land for the London Eye. [1198]

Tessa Jowell: I have been in discussion with the South Bank Centre Chair, Lord Hollick, over this matter. My officials have been in regular contact with colleagues at the South Bank Centre about this issue over the last six months.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what role her Department played in the negotiations on the original lease of land on London's South Bank for the London Eye. [1199]

Tessa Jowell: My Department consented to the original lease following the completion of commercial negotiations between the South Bank Centre and the London Eye, and will similarly be required to give consent to the new lease.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when her Department was first informed of the breakdown in negotiations on the lease of land between the South Bank Centre and the London Eye. [1200]

Tessa Jowell: There has been no breakdown. Negotiations are ongoing.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of whether the eviction notice served on the London Eye by the South Bank Centre is in the public interest. [1227]

Tessa Jowell: No "eviction notice" or "notice to quit" has been served and no legal proceedings have been commenced.

The South Bank Centre wrote to British Airways London Eye on 14 December 2004 to advise them that their lease expired on 31 December 2004. The letter pointed out that under the terms of the original lease previously agreed, the site was to be vacated six months after that lease expired (i.e. by 1 July 2005).

However, subsequent to this letter, the South Bank Centre agreed a "standstill agreement" with the London Eye under which it committed to not apply to the court for possession of the site for an agreed period while negotiations over a new lease were ongoing. Negotiations are still continuing.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the contribution the London Eye makes to UK *(a)* tourism and *(b)* cultural heritage. [1229]

Tessa Jowell: The London Eye was visited by 3.7 million people in 2004, and clearly plays an important role in London's tourism economy. The Greater London Authority (GLA), which has responsibility for the development of tourism in London, is currently working to produce a modeling system that will be capable of estimating the economic impact of such major attractions.

Sign Language

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the Government provided to support sign language interpreted programmes in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004; and what proportion of programmes were signed in each year. [929]

James Purnell: The Government are committed to extending access to broadcasting services for people with sensory impairments and have placed the responsibility for the provision of signing on individual broadcasters. No direct Government funding is provided for such services.

Comprehensive data for the proportion of signed television programmes for 1997 and 2004 are not available.

Following the implementation of the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom published their code on Television Access Services in July 2004, which came into effect for most broadcasters on 29 December 2004. Targets for signing are set by Ofcom and were previously set by the Independent Television Commission and the BBC.

The relevant dates for the purpose of determining when provision of signing must begin are 1 January 1997 in the case of BBCs 1 and 2, 1 January 1998 for Channel 5 and 1 January 2000 for Channels 3 and 4 and S4C Digital. In the case of digital television programme services, the relevant date is the date on which the provision of that service began. The BBC are required to sign 4 per cent. of their programmes. The remaining PSB's are required to sign 3 per cent. Requirements on signing increase to 5 per cent. of programming within 10 years of the relevant date.

From December 2004, 60 additional digital channels have been required to sign 1 per cent. of programmes. Again this figure will rise by the tenth anniversary of the relevant date to the statutory target of 5 per cent.

Welsh Language Television Programmes

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the Government provided to support the production of television programmes in the Welsh language in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [949]

James Purnell: The Welsh Fourth Channel Authority, S4C, received grant in aid of £72.223 million in 1997 and £85.729 million in 2004, under its statutory funding formula. Under the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 1990, S4C also receives Welsh language programmes from the BBC free of charge. These were valued at £16.7 million in the financial year 1997–98 and £20.3 million in 2003–04.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Equal Pay Act

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what plans the Government has to review the Equal Pay Act 1970. [546]

Meg Munn: The Government has announced an independent Equalities Review, led by Trevor Phillips, to improve our understanding of the long-term and underlying barriers to opportunity. Alongside this, the Discrimination Law Review, led by the Women and Equality Unit in the Department of Trade and Industry, will examine the current anti-discrimination legislative framework, by developing proposals for a more modern, coherent and effective legal framework for tackling discrimination.

Women's Pay

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what plans the Government has to improve pay progression for women. [543]

Meg Munn: We set up the Women and Work Commission to make recommendations when it reports to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in autumn 2005 on tackling the causes of the gender pay gap.

The national minimum wage helps to close the gender pay gap. Around 70 per cent. of beneficiaries of recent increases were women. We will increase this further to £5.05 in October 2005 and to £5.35 in October 2006.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Domestic Violence Trials (Special Measures)

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General (1) how many applications by the Crown Prosecution Service for the use of special measures to protect complainants in trials concerning domestic violence were *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful during (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004; [608]

(2) how many applications for the use of special measures for complainants in trials concerning domestic violence were made by the Crown Prosecution Service in 2003 and 2004. [609]

The Solicitor-General: Special measures were introduced in Part II of the Youth Justice Criminal Evidence Act 1999. Measures include, for example, the use of screens, video link, video-taped evidence in chief and aids to communication. They are available in criminal trials to support eligible witnesses. The CPS does not collate national data on the number of special measures applications it makes or on whether such applications are successful or not.

Rape Cases

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General (1) what his policy is on writing to rape complainants to explain why a discontinued case would not proceed; [610]

(2) if he will make it his policy that the complainant should be personally visited by the Crown Prosecution Service lawyer who makes the decisions when cases of rape are discontinued. [613]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service's policy in cases of this kind is for the crown prosecutor concerned to write to the complainant to explain why the charge of rape has been discontinued or substantially altered. The Crown prosecutor will also offer a meeting with the complainant to discuss the decision. The meeting will usually be held at a CPS office or other suitable venue. The wishes of the complainant will be taken into account when deciding the venue.

The policy affords the complainant an explanation for the decision and allows her to decide whether she wishes to have a meeting to discuss that decision further.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what the Crown Prosecution Service's policy is on the use of video interviews of rape complainants as evidence in chief. [605]

The Solicitor-General: Video interviews of rape complainants can be led by the prosecution in evidence when the rape complainant is "vulnerable" as defined by section 16 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999.

The CPS policy is to prosecute rape cases as robustly and effectively as possible. In so doing, prosecutors should take advantage of special measures provisions, including now the ability to use a video recorded interview as evidence in chief, where it is right to do so. This has to be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the views and needs of the complainant. As such, there is no specific policy in relation to the use of video interviews.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan *(a)* dated 11 April regarding the MG Rover Dealership Network and *(b)* dated 21 February on hydrogen technology. [1184]

Ian Pearson: The hon. Member's letter of 11 April to my right hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Ms Hewitt) on the MG Rover Dealership Network now falls within my remit as Minister of State for Trade, Investment and Foreign Affairs and I will reply to it very shortly. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for North Warwickshire, (Mr. Mike O'Brien) former DTI Minister for Energy and e-Commerce, replied on 11 March to the letter of 21 February on Hydrogen Technology. I have asked for a copy to be sent to the hon. Member.

Crude Oil

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much crude oil has been produced by the UK in million tonnes of oil in each year from 1999 to 2004; how much crude oil has been consumed by the UK in each of these years; and what the Government's estimate is of when the UK will recommence being a net importer of crude oil. [916]

Malcolm Wicks: Figures for UK production and consumption of crude oil are presented in the following table.

		Million tonne
	Crude oil production	*Crude oil demand*
1999	128	82
2000	118	81
2001	108	76
2002	107	78
2003	98	77
2004	88	82

The figures for 1999 to 2003 from the table are taken from DTI's Digest of UK Energy Statistics while the provisional figures for 2004 come from the March 2005 edition of Energy Trends. Copies of both publications are in the Libraries of the House. The 2004 figures will not be finalised until July when published in the 2005 edition of the Digest of UK Energy Statistics.

The 2003 Energy White Paper noted that the UK is expected to become a net importer of oil on an annual basis by around 2010. This is still considered to be the case.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Standing Committee for veterinary medicinal products, (ii) Standing Committee on technical rules and standards, including rules relating to information society services and (iii) Management Committee on horizontal questions concerning trade in processed agricultural products not listed in Annex I met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [639]

Ian Pearson: The Standing Committee on Veterinary Medicinal Products for the Adaptation to Technical Progress of the Directives on the Removal of Technical Barriers to Trade in the Veterinary Medicinal Products Sector is a regulatory committee. Most of its business is conducted electronically and meetings are only held in the event of an issue arising that is considered to require discussion. According to records, no meetings were held during the Italian, Irish or Dutch presidencies of the EU.

The Standing Committee on technical rules and standards, including rules relating to information society services met in 2003 on 2–3 October and 9–11 December and in 2004 on 10–11 March, 24 June and 5–7 October. All of the meetings were held in Brussels and the UK was represented by officials from the DTI. The meetings covered issues related to the implementation of the Directive (98/34/EC), most of which were technical regulations and standardisation mandates, and also policy on standardisation.

The Management Committee on horizontal questions concerning trade in processed agricultural products not listed in Annex I met in 2003 on 4 July, 12 September, 10 October, 7 November and 5 December and in 2004 on 23 January, 5 March, 19 March, 2 April, 14 May, 8 July, 10 September, 15 October and 3 December. All of the meetings were held in Brussels and the UK was represented by officials from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Rural Payments Agency. The UK's priority within the Management Committee is to ensure the efficient operation of the non-Annex I exports refund regime.

European Law

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the number of Government employees likely to be affected by ECJ case 2005/C31/16 of OJ C31 of 5 February; where such staff are located; what estimate has been made of the cost of implementation; and if he will make a statement. [501]

Mr. Sutcliffe: As the Infraction Case in question is still ongoing it would not be appropriate to make an estimation of affected Government employees; their location and the cost of implementation.

Export Control

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans his Department has to consult on public sector involvement in delivering Export Control Organisation services. [936]

Malcolm Wicks: I have no present plans to consult as I have reached no view on any changes to the delivery of the Export Control Organisation's services.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what changes in personnel and resources allocated to export control *(a)* have been made since 2003 and *(b)* are planned; and if he will make a statement. [939]

Malcolm Wicks: For the 2003–04 financial year, the Export Control Organisation (ECO) was allocated a running costs budget of £6,094,000, and for 2004–05, £6,389,000. The 2005–06 budget has not yet been formally delegated.

In 2003–04 ECO had an average of 156 staff in post; and in 2004–05, an average of 142. ECO has a target to reduce its headcount to 109 staff by 1 April 2006.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff there are in the Export Control Organisation; how many there were in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05; what sections of the organisation have experienced changes in staff numbers since 2002–03; and what targets have been set for the number of staff in each section of the organisation. [940]

Malcolm Wicks: The Export Control Organisation (ECO) currently has 125 staff in post. In 2002–03 ECO had an average of 146 staff in post; in 2003–04 an average of 156; and in 2004–05, an average of 142. There have been changes in staff numbers in all sections of the organisation. Targets are not section specific; there is an overall target for headcount of 109 by 1 April 2006.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department has decided whether to seek private sector partner involvement in delivering Export Control Organisation services; and if he will make a statement on the future of the organisation. [945]

Malcolm Wicks: This matter is still under consideration.

Manufacturing Advisory Service

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the progress of the Manufacturing Advisory Service in assisting manufacturing businesses in *(a)* the West Midlands and *(b)* England to become more competitive. [1020]

Alun Michael: The Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) has made excellent progress since it was established in 2002 as part of the Manufacturing

Strategy. It has played a key role in helping many manufacturers across the UK to improve productivity. On average, every company assisted has seen an increase in added value of £107,000 as a result of productivity improvements generated through MAS.

(a) In the West Midlands MAS has fielded 4,211 inquiries, completed 1,819 company diagnostic reviews, and completed 727 in-depth company interventions adding value of £7.56 million.

(b) In England MAS has fielded 48,410 inquiries, completed 8,500 company diagnostic reviews, and completed 2,443 in-depth company interventions adding value of £103.3 million.

Morocco

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice the Department gives to companies wishing to trade with Morocco. [63]

Ian Pearson: British firms looking at trading overseas receive advice and a broad range of support services through UK Trade and Investment (UKTI). Through UKTI, we are helping unprecedented numbers of smaller companies break into export markets like Morocco. UKTI monitors commercial developments in Morocco and alerts British firms on a case-by-case basis to specific opportunities. UKTI also supports the activities of the private sector led Moroccan British Business Council, which aims to improve the climate for bilateral trade and investment and increase the number of Moroccan and British exporters.

Rover/Phoenix Holdings

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Department intends to launch an investigation into the activities of Phoenix Holdings directors. [217]

Ian Pearson: Sir Bryan Nicholson, chairman of the Financial Reporting Council, has been asked to carry out a Financial Reporting Review Panel (FRRP) review into the audited accounts of MG Rover and its associated companies over the past five years. He is due to report shortly. In addition, the administrators have a duty to report to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on the conduct of the directors.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* meetings and *(b)* contact took place between Ministers of the Department and the directors of Phoenix Venture Holdings following their taking over of MG Rover. [218]

Ian Pearson: Recently, Ministers from the Department have frequently spoken to the directors of Phoenix Venture Holdings (PVH) in relation to the proposed joint venture with SAIC. There have also been a number of letters to and from PVH regarding the prospective deal with SAIC.

Prior to this year there were three meetings between my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State and one or more directors of PVH. These were in November 2004, at the Motor Show in May 2004 and at a CBI dinner in November 2002.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the negotiations which took place between his Department's officials and the Shanghai Automotive Company over the takeover of MG Rover. [219]

Ian Pearson: The negotiations on the proposed joint ventures between MG Rover and SAIC were a matter for the companies themselves. The Government did, however, do all it could to help bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion, and officials from the DTI did engage with both MG Rover and SAIC to that end. We regret that the efforts of all concerned were ultimately unsuccessful.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much public money was given to Phoenix Venture Holdings before it went into administration in April. [220]

Ian Pearson: No public money has been given to Phoenix Venture Holdings, which is not in administration.

MG Rover Group entered administration in April 2005.

Since 2000 MG Rover Group has been offered assistance in the following two areas:

A grant of up to £9 million under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 towards the cost of employee training and development, of which £4 million is from Rover Task Force funding and the balance from European funds. The company had drawn down some £5 million to date.

An offer of grant of £1.057 million (awarded to a partnership of MG Rover, MIRA, Powertrain Ltd. and Pi Technology) under the Department for Transport's Ultra Low Carbon Car Challenge, of which £424,830 has been drawn down.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions the former Secretary of State for Trade and Industry had with MG Rover before he announced that MG Rover was to go into administration. [221]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State had a number of discussions with the management of MG Rover and trades union representatives regarding the company's proposed joint venture with SAIC and the prospects for its successful conclusion in the weeks preceding the Directors' decision to put the company into administration. On the day the decision was taken, the then Secretary of State spoke with John Towers on the telephone on a number of occasions.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to preserve the UK's opt-outs from the Working Time Directive; and if he will make a statement. [772]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is still the case that we are determined to maintain the opt out. To this end we are working closely with the European Commission and other EU member states to ensure a satisfactory outcome.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Air Transport (Emissions)

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of *(a)* carbon dioxide emissions and *(b)* Kyoto basket emissions are estimated to have come from air transport flights taking off from and landing in UK airports in 2003. [694]

Margaret Beckett: The proportion of emissions in the UK greenhouse gas inventory of *(a)* carbon dioxide (CO_2); and *(b)* the Kyoto basket of greenhouse gases (GHG) from air transport flights taking off from and landing in UK airports in 2003 are shown in the following table.

	(a) CO_2	*(b)* GHG
Emissions from domestic aviation Million tonnes of carbon equivalent (MtCeq/yr)	0.6	2.1
Total UK emissions inventory (MtCeq/yr)	156.1	181.6
UK domestic aviation as a proportion of total emissions (percentage)	0.4	1.2

The data cover emissions from all civil domestic passenger and freight traffic movements inside the UK. Under guidelines agreed internationally, emissions from international aviation taking off and landing at UK airports are not included in UK total emissions, but are estimated for information purposes. Emissions of CO_2 and all greenhouse gases from international aviation in 2003 are estimated to have been 29.7 and 30.0 MtCeq/yr respectively.

Badgers

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to review the working of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. [130]

Jim Knight: The Department is looking at how it implements its licensing responsibilities under the Act. This process has already started with a public consultation which closed on 5 February 2004. The Department is in the process of summarising those responses. It is hoped that these will be published by the end of August.

From these responses we will develop proposals for change and we will go out for further consultation on these. The potential effect of the coming together of the two licensing authorities (English Nature and parts of Defra) into the new integrated agency, Natural England, will also need to be considered.

This review of licensing procedures does not include any plans to open up the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 for amendment.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what mechanism exists to review the status of land designated for public access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. [1508]

Jim Knight: Section 10 of the Act requires the Countryside Agency to review the conclusive map of open country and registered common land not more than ten years after the time that the conclusive map was first issued and not less frequently than every ten years thereafter. These periods may be amended by regulation. At the time of the review the Agency must consider whether land shown on the conclusive map as open country and registered common land remains open country and registered common land, and whether any other land covered by the conclusive map for that area should now be shown as open country and registered common land.

Section 11 of the Act makes provision to make regulations supplementing the provisions of section 10 of the Act including the procedure to be followed by the Countryside Agency in reviewing the maps.

Horse Manure

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent changes have been made to regulations governing disposal of substantial amounts of horse manure by equestrian establishments. [150]

Mr. Bradshaw: Changes have recently been made to a number of exemptions from waste management licensing in the Waste Management Licensing (England and Wales) (Amendment and Related Provisions) Regulations 2005. These amendments are due to come into force on 1 July 2005 and include changes to the composting exemption.

The amended composting exemption will require establishments and undertakings to compost manure on an impermeable pavement with sealed drainage. A charge will also be made for registration of the exemption. The charge will depend on size of operation and is made so that the Environment Agency can recover the cost of regulation.

These changes will not apply to the storage of manure. They will only apply to the active mixing of manure with other biodegradable waste to make compost.

All individuals and most liveries, stables and other establishments that keep horses will not be subject to the recent changes. If the pile is simply manure there is no need to apply for a waste licence or register an exemption from one.

Marine Environment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to bring forward legislation to protect the marine environment. [92]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government are committed to publication of a draft Marine Bill in the first session of this Parliament. Introduction of the Bill will follow later in this Parliament, once we have considered the outcome of both a public consultation and pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Bill.

Quota Fishing

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the consequences for the Spanish Government of losing ECJ case C-42/03 (OJ C19 of 22 January 2005) on failing to control excess to quota fishing; what representations she has made on the issue; what the scale of surfeit was; and if she will make a statement. [502]

Mr. Bradshaw: The ECJ found that the Spanish Government failed to fulfill obligations relating to the management of its fishing quotas during the period 1990 to 1997, and ordered Spain to pay the costs of the case. On the basis of information provided by Spain the amount of overfishing was as shown in the table.

	Amount (tonnes)
1990	1,186
1991	1,728
1992	2,196
1993	179
1994	378
1995	3,737
1996	62
1997	72

It is for the Spanish Government to consider the implications of the court's ruling. The UK Government has made no representations on this case.

Sewerage

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce requirements that all sewers and drains are laid by suitably qualified persons. [942]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 25 May 2005]:* A protocol for the construction of new sewers was published in 2002. Its aim is to put into practice a common approach for the design and construction for new development, to enable wider adoption of sewers in England and Wales.

A review of the effectiveness of the protocol was recently undertaken on the Department's behalf. Its findings indicate that developers are not always adhering to the protocol. The Government are now considering the results of this review and its possible implications for the current arrangements for [illegible] construction of sewers.

I understand that Energy and Utility Skills [illegible] Sector Skills Council whose purpose is to identify [illegible] skill needs of employers and provide effective training solutions in the electricity, gas, waste management and water industries, offers a 13 week Ambition Energy programme. This has been designed for operators who are involved in the maintenance of the sewerage infrastructure.

Snares and Traps

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish a summary of responses to the consultation on "Snares and Traps, The Way Forward", which closed on 13 November 2003. [744]

Jim Knight: Defra carried out an informal consultation in England on traps and snares at the end of 2003. As the consultation sought general views on the use of snares under Section 11 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and traps under section 8 of the Pests Act 1954, there is no requirement to publish a summary of responses.

The principle outcome of the consultation was the convening of an independent snares working group. The aim of the working group is to agree good practice guidelines, produce a code of good practice and advise Defra on the next steps.

Whales

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the International Whaling Commission's approach to the protection of minke and humpback whales. [183]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since the 1985–86 whaling seasons, the International Whaling Commission has maintained a moratorium on the hunting and killing of all great whales, including minke and humpbacked whales. Norway objected to the introduction of the moratorium, is thus not bound by it and hunts minke whales legally; Japan and Iceland abide by the moratorium, but pursue so-called 'scientific whaling' as provided for under Article VIII of the International Convention on the Regulation of Whaling.

The UK Government are strongly opposed to all forms of whaling other than limited whaling by indigenous people to meet a substantiated subsistence need. We regularly protest to Norway, Japan and Iceland about their continued whaling operations which, though legal, are not in keeping with the spirit of the IWC.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Catholic/Protestant Areas (Population Numbers)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of people living in Northern Ireland were living in areas that were more than 90 per cent. *(a)* Catholic and *(b)* Protestant in each of the last three censuses. [621]

Angela E Smith: Table 1 shows the percentage of people living in Northern Ireland in areas (ie electoral wards) where more than 90 per cent. had *(a)* a Catholic community background and *(b)* a Protestant community background according to the 2001 census. Community background information was derived from the responses provided to the current religion and religion brought up in questions, the latter question being asked of those who indicated that they did not currently belong to any particular religion.

Table 1: Based on community background (religion or religion brought up in)

Percentage of people in Northern Ireland living in electoral wards more than:	*2001 census*
90 per cent. Catholic	15.8
90 per cent. Protestant	12.0

Note:

The category Protestant relates to Protestant and other Christian (including Christian related)

The provision of community background information was a new development in the 2001 census aimed at meeting the need for additional equality monitoring data. Directly comparable information is not available for either of the two previous censuses in 1991 and 1981, which gathered information on current religion only. Table 2 presents the results for 1981, 1991 and 2001 based on responses to the religion question.

Table 2: Based on religion

Percentage of people in Northern Ireland living in Electoral Wards that were more than:	*1981 census*	*1991 census*	*2001 census*
90 per cent. Catholic	0.0	9.0	8.7
90 per cent. Protestant	0.8	0.3	0.0

Note:

For 1981 and 1991, the Protestant category includes other denominations which comprised both other Christian (including Christian related) and other religions and philosophies. In 2001 the Protestant category excludes other religions and philosophies, which accounted for 0.3 per cent. of the population.

The figures in table 2 are affected by non-response to the religion question and people stating that they have no religion. The proportion of people falling into this category in each of the past three censuses were 18.5 per cent. in 1981, 11.0 per cent. in 1991 and 13.9 per cent. in 2001. Many electoral wards where the Catholic or Protestant percentage of the population is high fall short of being 90 per cent. Catholic or Protestant because of the presence of people who have not responded to the religion question or stated that they have no current religion.

Children's Fund

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Children's Fund. [515]

Angela E Smith: In the course of the Northern Ireland Priorities and Budget 2005–08 process, Ministers concluded that, rather than having a separate allocation process for the Children's Fund, the unallocated sums that had previously been earmarked over the Budget period should be allocated within the mainstream Budget process.

Although the published Priorities and Budget document does not explicitly refer to the Children's Fund, all commitments to existing Children's Fund projects have been honoured and the allocation to the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety includes almost £15 million, on a specific ring-fenced basis, for this purpose. The issue of further ring-fenced allocations for future years will be considered in subsequent Budget processes.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether an audit has been conducted of whether there is a neutral working environment in the Northern Ireland Prison Service. [453]

Mr. Woodward: While no specific audit has been completed in regards to a neutral working environment, it is the Northern Ireland Prison Service policy that all managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that:

any material, which, is offensive or potentially offensive is not displayed or circulated in the workplace;

they, are alert to unacceptable behaviour and take appropriate action;

complaints are taken seriously; and

staff are not victimised in any way.

This policy is enforced by senior management on their visits to work locations.

The service proactively encourages staff to report any incidents where the neutral working environment has been breached. Steps taken include:

New policies are subject to Section 75 review;

All staff entering the NIPS receive equal opportunity awareness training;

All staff are issued with a copy of the Harassment and Bullying Policy Statement and Guidance;

A new equal opportunities guide has just been printed and will be issued to all staff;

Harassment contact officers are available at all work locations;

Posters relating to equality are widely displayed on notice boards at each work location.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will break down the complement of the Northern Ireland Prison Service in each of the last five years by *(a)* community background and *(b)* gender. [454]

Mr. Woodward: The breakdown of the complement of the Northern Ireland Prison Service grades for the last five years is detailed as follows. There has been little change in the composition—only 130 prison service grade staff have been recruited in this period.

	Male	*Female*	*Protestant*	*Roman Catholic*	*Percentage Non determined*
Prison service grades					
2001	83.95	16.1	79.2	8.4	12.4
2002	83.9	16.1	79.2	8.6	12.2
2003	83.7	16.3	80.1	8.3	11.6
2004	83.8	16.2	80.2	8.2	11.6
2005	83.2	16.8	80.2	8.7	11.1

	Male	*Female*	*Protestant*	*Roman Catholic*	*Percentage Non determined*
General service grades					
2001	39.9	60.1	74.8	21.8	3.4
2002	39.1	60.9	74.1	21.8	4.1
2003	36.7	63.3	75.1	22.8	2.1
2004	34.5	65.5	76.9	21.2	1.9
2005	33.0	67.0	75.9	22.5	1.6

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when, on present trends, it is calculated that the Northern Ireland Prison Service will be reflective of the community as a whole in terms of community background. [504]

Mr. Woodward: Over recent years the Northern Ireland Prison Service has significantly reduced staffing levels as a result of the closure of HMP Belfast and HMP Maze. There has been no major recruitment campaigns to affect the composition of the service.

In the service's recruitment competition for night custody officers last year it specifically encouraged Roman Catholics and women to apply. The wording of the welcome statements in the job advertisements read as follows:

> "The Northern Ireland Prison Service is committed to equality of opportunity in employment. All applications for employment will be considered strictly on the basis of merit.
>
> The service welcomes applications from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, gender, race, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants. As Roman Catholics and women are currently known to be under-represented in the Northern Ireland Prison Service, applications from the Roman Catholic section of the community and from women would be particularly welcome".

Given the small number of staff currently being recruited it is not at this stage practicable to determine when the composition of the service will fully reflect the wider population of Northern Ireland.

Senior Civil Service Review

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will make a statement on the implementation of the Senior Civil Service Review; [538]

(2) if he will make a statement on progress in implementing each recommendation made by the Senior Civil Service Review. [559]

Angela E Smith: An action plan on the recommendations arising from the Ouseley Review of the Senior Civil Service in Northern Ireland was put out for public consultation in July 2002. A comprehensive update, detailing the progress made against the recommendations was published in January 2005. A copy of the update has been placed in the Library.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

British Interests

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what definition he uses of the term British interests worldwide. [1135]

Mr. Straw: British interests worldwide can be described as the promotion of a secure and prosperous United Kingdom in a safe, just and prosperous world. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is guided in its work to promote and protect these interests by the command paper UK International Priorities: A Strategy for the FCO published in December 2003. This sets out the UK's international priorities and objectives and the role of the FCO in achieving them. Further information on the Strategy can be found on the FCO website at: http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet7Front?pagenam = OpenMarket/Xcelerate/PreviewPage&AssetType = Page&ResolvePageId = FCO_OBJ_StrategyMain.

Burma

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the government of Burma regarding violations of religious freedom for Christians and Muslims. [844]

Ian Pearson: Our ambassador in Rangoon has drawn to the attention of the Burmese Foreign Minister the serious concerns expressed by hon. Members and Peers of both Houses about the question of religious freedom in Burma. Most recently, our ambassador reminded the Foreign Minister on 16 May that UK parliamentarians are particularly concerned about human rights abuses in ethnic areas.

The UK works closely with its international partners to press for improvements to human rights in Burma. When the EU Troika, including the United Kingdom, met the Burmese Foreign Minister in Kyoto on 6 May they emphasised the need for the regime to enter into a constructive dialogue with ethnic groups to achieve lasting national reconciliation.

Discrimination and persecution on the basis of religious or ethnic background has been condemned in successive UK and EU co-sponsored UN Resolutions on Burma, most recently at the UN Commission on Human Rights in April. We fully support the efforts in this field of the UN Secretary General's Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro.

We will continue to raise our concerns at every suitable opportunity.

EU Presidency

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to include diversity issues in the themes of the UK Presidency of the EU. [379]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: One of the Government's priorities during the UK Presidency of the EU will be to start implementing key parts of the justice and home affairs programme agreed in The Hague in 2004. Specifically, we will seek to focus the EU on practical measures which will benefit all citizens. The Government are also looking at proposals to support diversity-related events that take place during our Presidency.

European Administrative School

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the establishment of the European Administrative School; what its role is; whether European Parliament personnel will be required to attend, with particular reference to political group staff; what requirement there will be for balance in the presentation of European integration; and where it will be sited. [498]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The European Administrative School (EAS) was established in order to step up investment in the professional training of the staff of the various European Institutions, namely: the European Parliament; Council; Commission; Court of Justice; Court of Auditors; European Economic and Social Committee; Committee of the Regions; and the European Ombudsman. Its role is to:

design, organise and evaluate training activities;

facilitate participation in external activities; and

carry out any tasks related to or in support of its duties.

The training will include management courses for officials who perform management functions and induction courses for new members of staff. Other courses may also be organised by each of the institutions in line with their specific needs. European Parliament personnel, including political group staff, will only be required to attend if the training is necessary for them in their role.

The EAS is currently attached administratively to the European Communities Personnel Selection Office in Brussels. As a general rule, the courses organised by the school will be given in both Brussels and Luxembourg, but other places of employment may be taken into consideration.

The EAS gives training in administrative duties, not presentation of European integration.

European Security and Defence Policy

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress being made on European Security and Defence Policy. [140]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Since its beginnings in 1998, European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) has developed considerably. It has enabled the EU to launch three peacekeeping operations: in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2003); Macedonia (2003); and Bosnia (December 2004). The Bosnia operation took over from NATO's Stabilisation Force and is proving the efficacy of the Berlin Plus arrangements agreed in 2003 for EU access to NATO assets.

The EU has also launched a number of civilian ESDP missions. These include police missions in Macedonia, Bosnia and the Democratic Republic of Congo; a rule of law mission in Georgia; and, most recently, an integrated rule of law mission for Iraq, to provide training for high and middle-ranking officials in the criminal justice system. The EU's first security sector reform mission, with both civilian and military elements, will be launched in the Democratic Republic of Congo on 2 June.

Beyond operations, successes include the establishment of the European Defence Agency in 2004 to drive forward capability development and improve defence-industrial co-operation; the continuing development of a capacity for military and joint civil/military planning, based on agreed consultation arrangements with NATO; and the establishment of Initial Operating Capability for the rapid-response Battlegroups initiative, with Full Operating Capability expected in 2007. Most recently, a Civil/Military Cell has been established to strengthen strategic planning for joint civil/military missions. It is still recruiting staff; once recruitment is complete, it will play an important part in the EU's efforts to improve the co-ordination of its wide range of security instruments in order to act more coherently and effectively in crisis management, not least in liaison with other key actors, such as the UN and the African Union.

More broadly, the development of military and civilian capabilities continues, including post-tsunami work on improving the EU's disaster response capability. The agreed military Headline Goal 2010 focuses on deployability, sustainability and interoperability.

The UK continues to play a leading role. For example, we proposed the Battlegroups initiative jointly with France, and have made a national Battlegroup available on standby for the first six months of Initial Operating Capability (January-June 2005); and the December 2004 Council agreement on planning capabilities was based on a UK-France-Germany proposal.

The Luxembourg Presidency will issue a report on ESDP progress at the European Council on 16 June, which will be issued to Parliament for scrutiny. A White Paper on the UK Presidency will be published on 30 June that will highlight progress made on ESDP so far this year and EU objectives for the remainder.

European Union Civil Service Tribunal

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the *(a)* role, *(b)* membership and *(c)* legal basis of the European Union Civil Service Tribunal. [496]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Council of Ministers announced its Decision creating the European Union Civil Service Tribunal on 2 November 2004. Work to enable the Tribunal to begin operations is currently in progress. The Council Decision makes the following provisions.

(a) The Tribunal will adjudicate in disputes between the EU's institutions and their officials and other staff.

(b) The Council of Ministers will appoint seven judges after an open call for applications, in consultation with an independent committee consisting

of former members of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and Court of First Instance, and other lawyers of recognised competence.

(c) The legal basis for the Decision setting up the Tribunal (Council Decision 2004/752/EC, Euratom of 2 November 2004) is Article 225a of the EC Treaty. The Tribunal is an integral part of the ECJ.

DEFENCE

Combat Clothing

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the combat clothing items delivered under the cut and sew contract have been supplied from China. [803]

Mr. Ingram: To date over 193,000 items (of which over 85,000 are combat clothing items) under the cut and sew contract, have been delivered within the prime contractors supply chain from a variety of sources, both in the UK and overseas. This includes around 70,000 items of combat clothing supplied from China.

Darfur

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with his NATO counterparts regarding a role for NATO in the Darfur region. [857]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom strongly supports the expansion of the African Union mission in Darfur and is working not just with NATO, but with the EU and the UN to find the best means by which the international community as a whole can support the African Union's objectives. The Secretary of State for Defence discussed the provision of support to the mission in Darfur with fellow EU Defence Ministers, the EU High Representative and the NATO Secretary-General at the meeting of the EU's General Affairs and External Relations Council in Brussels on 23 May.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what role he expects NATO to play in Darfur. [867]

Mr. Ingram: As requested by Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare, the Chairman of the Commission of the African Union, NATO is considering, in close consultation with the EU and the UN, what logistical support it can best provide to the African Union's peacekeeping mission in Darfur. Full details of NATO's contribution will become clearer following a donor conference in Addis Ababa on 26 May 2005, but it is likely to include: assistance with the deployment of the expanded African Union mission, including strategic lift, and the training of African Union personnel to improve their capacity.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which of his Department's properties and areas of land are *(a)* listed for disposal and *(b)* under consideration for disposal. [846]

Mr. Touhig: Details of Ministry of Defence properties and land currently listed for disposal are available in the Library of the House. It should be noted however that the need to retain such properties and land is constantly under review. Consequently the list changes frequently and generally it is updated quarterly.

I regret that I am unable to provide a list of properties and land being considered for disposal due to the commercially sensitive nature of the information. I can however, assure the hon. Member that the Ministry of Defence does not seek to retain a site once it has been clearly established that there is no known defence requirement to do so.

MARS Programme

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the timetable is for the MARS programme. [1134]

Mr. Ingram: The Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) programme is currently in the Concept Phase. We are planning for the Assessment Phase to commence shortly, and for the main investment decision to be made in 2008.

Parachute Centre, Acklington

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Department has objected to the planning application for a parachute jumping centre at Acklington, Northumberland on grounds of possible conflict with low-flying military aircraft. [1159]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence has not raised any objection to the proposed parachute jumping centre at Acklington, Northumberland.

RAF Menwith Hill

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was reimbursed by the US authorities at RAF Menwith Hill in lieu of payment to the MoD Police Agency in each of the last five years. [847]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence Police and Guarding Agency received the following amounts from the United States authorities in the last five years in relation to services provided at Menwith Hill.

	£
2004–05	5,898,000
2003–04	4,624,000
2002–03	4,514,000
2001–02	1,725,000
2000–01	1,660,000

Soldiers' Kit

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much the Government is spending on improving the personal kit of soldiers in the armed forces. [294]

Mr. Ingram: Last year the Ministry of Defence spent around £1.3 million on developing improvements to clothing and other personal equipment. In addition over £8 million was spent to provide additional enhancements to personal equipment for personnel deployed on operations.

Future requirements are planned to be met by the personal equipment and common operational clothing (PECOC) programme which will deliver a coherent and integrated system of operational clothing and equipment, including improved ballistic protection, meeting the needs of service personnel in the next decade and beyond.

TREASURY

Revenue and Customs Offices (Wales)

7. **Hywel Williams:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has for the future use of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs offices in Wales. [998]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs is preparing business plans to meet its efficiency savings for 2005–08. It is too early to say how this might affect any particular office.

National Insurance Contributions

8. **Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to change the rate of national insurance contributions. [999]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on the Floor of the House earlier today to the hon. Members for Congleton (Ann Winterton) and for Bury St. Edmunds (Mr. Ruffley).

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to change the rate of National Insurance contributions. [1005]

Dawn Primarolo: The national insurance contribution rates are set in the Budget.

G7 Presidency

11. **Mr. Sarwar:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the UK's aims for progress towards the millennium development goals under its presidency of the G7. [1002]

Mr. Gordon Brown: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on the Floor of the House earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Tooting (Mr. Khan).

Government Borrowing

16. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the level of Government net borrowing. [1007]

Mr. Des Browne: Budget projections show that net borrowing is expected to fall to a prudent level of 1.5 per cent. of GDP by 2009–10.

Aviation (Emissions)

18. **Norman Baker:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what further plans he has to use economic instruments to minimise climate change-related emissions from the aviation sector. [1009]

John Healey: The Government are committed to aviation joining the EU Emissions Trading Scheme from 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter. This will be a priority for the UK's presidency of the EU later this year.

The Air Transport White Paper also said that Government would press for other emissions reducing actions by the industry, and continue to explore options for the use of other economic instruments.

Manufacturing Growth

19. **Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimates he has made of rates of growth in manufacturing in the last year for which figures are available. [1010]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Official figures, published by the Office for National Statistics suggest that in 2004 manufacturing output rose by 1.4 per cent. manufacturing productivity rose by 5.3 per cent., manufacturing exports increased by 2 per cent. and business investment in the manufacturing sector rose by 3.2 per cent.—its highest growth rate for six years.

Office for National Statistics

20. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will review the status of the Office for National Statistics as a Government agency. [1011]

John Healey: The Government established the current Framework for National Statistics, which became operational in 2000. The Government's overriding aim in introducing the Framework has been to assure the quality of official statistics, and ensure freedom from political interference in their compilation and presentation. The Government committed to review the operation of the Framework after five years.

Direct Taxation

21. **Mr. Djanogly:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of the level of direct taxation on the state of the economy. [1012]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since 1997 the Government have consistently delivered macro-economic stability with strong growth and low inflation, thus establishing a track record that has been internationally acknowledged. The Government's approach to taxation balances the need to finance better quality public services, promote sustainable development and economic activity and ensure a fair tax environment.

International Finance Facility for Immunisation

22. **Chris McCafferty:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with EU and other governments on the International Finance Facility for Immunisation. [1013]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The IFF for Immunisation (IFFIm) is a pilot for the UK's proposal for an IFF to raise an additional $50 billion a year in development aid to help developing countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The IFFIm will demonstrate the technical feasibility of the larger IFF and the significant benefits of frontloading aid, disbursing $4 billion to save an additional 5 million children's lives in the years to 2015.

The UK, France and Sweden have committed to participate in the IFFIm and Germany and Italy support the proposal. We will continue to engage with other countries within the G8, EU and UN in order to finalise and launch the IFFIm.

Full Employment

Angela Eagle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures he is making to achieve full employment in every region. [1006]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government's measures to achieve full employment in every region are built on a platform of macro-economic stability, and include new deal, investment in skills and training, and policies to make work pay. These policies have seen over 2 million more people in work since 1997, a record employment level.

Alcoholic Beverages (Fruit Content)

Mr. Heath: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the minimum fruit content is, expressed in percentage by volume, required for an alcoholic beverage to be treated as a cider or perry for the purposes of duty. [1158]

Dawn Primarolo: For the purposes of excise duty, cider and perry are defined as being of a strength exceeding 1.2 per cent. but less than 8.5 per cent. alcohol by volume, and obtained from the fermentation of apple or pear juice. HMRC also allow the addition of certain approved ingredients to impart colour or flavouring to the cider or perry.

Autism

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the percentage of people suffering from autism who are in employment; and if he will make a statement. [676]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Laurence Robertson, dated 26 May 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about the percentage of people suffering from autism who are in employment in the UK. I am replying in his absence. (676)

The attached table shows the information available relating to the health problems which were quoted by respondents to the Labour Force Survey, who were in employment, as affecting the work they do. The condition of autism is not specifically identified in the available data.

This estimate from the Labour Force Survey is, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Persons of working age[1] in employment with long-term health problems affecting the work they do: United Kingdom
Three months ending February 2005

Not seasonally adjusted	*Million*	*Percentage[2]*
Total of working age	36.4	100.0
Condition quoted by LFS respondents:		
All conditions	—	15.6
Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism) connected with arms or hands	—	0.8
Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism) connected with legs or feet	—	1.5
Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism) connected with back or neck	—	2.2
Difficulty in seeing (while wearing spectacles or contact lenses)	—	0.2
Difficulty in hearing	—	0.4
A speech impediment	—	0.0
Severe disfigurement, skin conditions, allergies	—	0.5
Chest or breathing problems, asthma, bronchitis	—	2.8
Heart, blood pressure blood circulation problems	—	2.5
Stomach, liver, kidney or digestive problems	—	1.0
Diabetes	—	1.1
Depression, bad nerves or anxiety	—	0.4
Epilepsy	—	0.3
Severe or specific learning difficulties (mental handicap)	—	0.2
Mental illness or suffer from phobia, panics or other nervous disorders	—	0.1
Progressive illness not included elsewhere (e.g. cancer, multiple sclerosis, symptomatic HIV, Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophy)	—	0.4
Other health problems or disabilities	—	1.4

[1] Men aged 16–64 and women aged 16–59.

[2] Persons in employment with long-term health problems (12 months or more) as a percentage of total population of working age.

Source:
ONS—Labour Force Survey

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter dated 9 March from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding Form VAT 1—Application for Registration. [1186]

Dawn Primarolo: I did so on 16 May.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter, from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan *(a)* dated 29 March regarding Inland Revenue penalties and *(b)* dated 5 April regarding small business tax burden. [1187]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Drug Sniffer Dogs

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many drug sniffer dogs are being *(a)* used at ports of entry into the UK and *(b)* trained. [1137]

Dawn Primarolo: As at 1 May 2005, there were 24 drug dogs in operation in HM Revenue and Customs at major ports of entry into the UK. All operational dogs are fully trained however at this present time there are no drugs dogs undergoing training.

Drug-related Deaths

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many drug-related deaths there have been in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England in each year since 2001. [1077]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Bill Wiggin, dated 26 May 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many drug-related deaths there have been in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England in each year since 2001. (1077)

Figures are readily available from death certification on deaths due to drug poisoning, not the total number that were drug-related. The most recent year for which figures are available is 2003. Numbers of deaths certified as due to drug poisoning for *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England in the three years 2001 to 2003 are given in the table below.

Figures are not readily available where death was indirectly related to the use of drugs, as the direct cause is generally selected as the underlying cause of death (e.g. HIV infection).

Deaths related to drug poisoning,[1] for (a) Wales[2] and (b) England,[2] 2001–03[3]

Calendar year	(a) Wales	(b) England
2001	175	2,699
2002	152	2,507
2003	147	2,288

[1] Defined using the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10): F11-F16, F18-F19, X40-X44, X60-X64, Y10-Y14, X85.

[2] Usual residence of the deceased.

[3] Data are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Source:

Office for National Statistics.

Employment Rates

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the net change in the number of jobs in the *(a)* agricultural and *(b)* manufacturing industry in Wales was in 2004. [1084]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Bill Wiggin, dated 26 May 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about net change in jobs in agriculture and manufacturing in Wales in 2004. I am replying in his absence. (1084)

The attached table provides estimates of the net change in employee jobs in 'agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing' and 'manufacturing' in Wales, between December 2003 and the latest available date, December 2004.

Estimates for agriculture, separate from hunting, forestry and fishing are not available for Wales.

Employee jobs in Wales

		Thousand
As at December:	*Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing*	*Manufacturing*
2003	13	180
2004	13	177
Net change	0	-3

Source:

Employee jobs, ONS

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the 10 local authority areas in the UK with the *(a)* lowest employment rate and *(b)* highest unemployment rate; and if he will make a statement. [808]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Laws, dated 26 May 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment. (808)

The attached tables give estimates respectively of the lowest and the highest employment rates for Unitary Authorities and Local Authority Districts in United Kingdom, for the twelve-month period ending February 2004.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Table 1: Unitary authorities and local authority districts with the lowest working age employment rates in United Kingdom—12 months ending February 2004

	Percentage[1]
Derry	49.8
Newham	52.4
Tower Hamlets	55.4
Easington (County Durham)	57.3
Haringey	57.3
Hackney	58.4
Belfast	59.9
Manchester	59.9
Nottingham	60.5
Liverpool	60.6

[1] People in employment as a percentage of all men aged 16 to 64 and women aged 16 to 59.

Source:

ONS Annual local area Labour Force Survey

Table 2: Unitary and local authority districts with the highest working age employment rates in United Kingdom—12 months ending February 2004

	Percentage[1]
City of London	[2]100.0
Melton (Leicestershire)	89.5
West Oxfordshire	89.3
Babergh (Suffolk)	87.9
Rossendale (Lancashire)	87.1
North West Leicestershire	87.0
South Northamptonshire	86.9

Table 2: Unitary and local authority districts with the highest working age employment rates in United Kingdom—12 months ending February 2004

	Percentage[1]
Taunton Deane (Somerset)	86.8
Forest Heath (Suffolk)	86.7
Daventry (Northamptonshire)	86.3

[1] People in employment as a percentage of all men aged 16 to 64 and women aged 16 to 59.

[2] Based a very small number of cases sampled in the survey.

Source:

ONS Annual local area Labour Force Survey

Entry Processing Units

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reasons Chatham entry processing unit has been closed. [162]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* Chatham entry processing unit has not been closed. Customs are considering alternative ways of discharging their responsibilities and these will be discussed with the trade prior to implementation.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what environmental impact assessment was prepared before the selection of Dover entry processing unit (EPU) over Chatham EPU. [163]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* No environmental impact assessment has been carried out as our proposals do not require any additional lorry journeys to Dover.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the criteria that led to the selection of Dover entry processing unit over Chatham EPU. [164]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* Import and export entry clearance can now be handled, via electronic means, from any location. Given this, it is sensible to locate clearance activity where the best service can be provided to UK trade. Dover has three times as many staff as Chatham and, unlike Chatham, can provide a 24-hour service, seven days a week. Preliminary soundings among trade representatives has confirmed that this level of service will meet their operational needs.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what criteria were used in making the decision that *(a)* Felixstowe, *(b)* Tilbury and *(c)* Dover would keep its entry processing unit. [268]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* Felixstowe, Tilbury, Dover, Southampton, Manchester and Heathrow have been identified as the locations with the greatest volumes of activity. Together they currently handle around 85 per cent. of all UK imports and exports, have substantial numbers of trained staff who can handle the remaining 15 per cent. and are strategically located throughout the UK. The future of non location critical activity at these locations is being considered as part of a major international trade project. The trade are being consulted during this project.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Customs Code Committee—counterfeit and pirated goods, (ii) Customs Code Committee—single administrative document and (iii) Customs Code Committee—movement of air or sea passengers' baggage (technical problems) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [638]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is as follows.

(i) Customs Code Committee—counterfeit and pirated goods.

Italian presidency
12 September 2003
Irish presidency
20 January 2004
16 February 2004
Dutch presidency
1 June 2004

(ii) Customs Code Committee—single administrative document

Italian presidency
13 October 2003
Irish presidency
20 February 2004
30 April 2004
Dutch presidency
10 September 2004
26 November 2004

All these meetings were held in Brussels and the UK was represented by HM Customs and Excise.

(iii) Customs Code—movement of air or sea passengers baggage.

I am not aware of the Committee meeting in this period.

Gershon Report

Mr. Soames: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his timetable is for the implementation of the Gershon report in respect of the Ministry of Defence. [1136]

Mr. Des Browne: The Government fully accepted the recommendations contained within Sir Peter Gershon's report and embedded these efficiency targets into the 2004 Spending Review settlements. Like all Government Departments, the Ministry of Defence is committed to deliver its agreed efficiency targets by 2007–08,

Gross Domestic Product

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what gross domestic product per capita was in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* England and *(c)* the UK in the last period for which figures are available. [1078]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Bill Wiggin, dated 26 May 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about GDP per capita in Wales, England and the UK in the last period for which figures are available. I am replying in his absence. (1078)

The latest published information is for 2003.

The estimates in the table are based on the regional Gross Value Added[1] (GVA) estimates published in December 2004. These are available on the National Statistics website at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=7359. The figures are in current prices and do not, therefore, allow for the change in prices over time (inflation) or differences in price levels (purchasing power) between regions at a point in time.

GVA per capita Wales, England and United Kingdom

£

	GVA per capita Wales	*GVA per capita England*	*GVA per capita UK less extra-regio*[2]
1997	9,809	12,313	12,085
1998	10,166	13,085	12,807
1999	10,487	13,641	13,337
2000	10,869	14,185	13,867
2001	11,440	14,889	14,545
2002	11,971	15,633	15,273
2003	12,629	16,339	15,980

[1] Information presented here is Gross Value Added (GVA) which is Gross Domestic Product (GDP) less taxes (plus subsidies) on products.

[2] Extra regio is that part of the UK's economic territory which cannot be allocated to any specific region.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of gross domestic product in the UK was accounted for by public sector expenditure in each of the last five years. [1132]

Mr. Des Browne: Figures for total managed expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product are available from Budget 2005 (HC 372) in Table C25: Historical series of Government expenditure (page 275).

London (Revenues/Expenditure)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will review the balance between revenues raised from and public expenditure spent in London. [996]

Mr. Des Browne: London's contribution to the Exchequer reflects the tax liability of London's businesses and employees in line with the UK's progressive national tax system.

In 2003–04 identifiable public expenditure per capita in London was 16 per cent. higher than the UK average—the highest per capita spending in England.

Low-income Households

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average income level was of the lowest earning 20 per cent. of households in each Government Office Region in the last period for which figures are available. [935]

John Healey: The average net equivalised weekly household income of the lowest earning 20 per cent. of households in each Government Office Region in 2004–05 is listed as follows

Government region	*Mean income*	*Median income*
North East	218	223
North West	228	234
York and Humber	221	231
East Midlands	230	237
West Midlands	224	230
Eastern	249	255
London	246	254
South East	263	271
South West	232	243
Wales	219	225
Scotland	229	236
Northern Ireland	223	223
All regions	233	241

The average household incomes are on a before-housing-cost basis and are based on the department's tax and benefit model (IGOTM) using the Family Resources Survey 2003–04, uprated to 2004–05 prices. Analysis by government office region often results in small sample sizes and therefore these results should be treated with caution.

The equivalised basis takes into account variations in both the size and the composition of households.

Migration

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of likely net migration in each of the next 10 years. [1051]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The most recent estimates come from the Government Actuary's latest (2003-based) national population projections. The information requested is available from the GAD website at: http://www.gad.gov.uk/Population/2003/methodology/migrass.htm

Oil Exports

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what contribution has been made to the UK's balance of trade by oil exports in each year from 1999 to 2004; and what contribution it is estimated will be made for each year between 2005 to 2010. [905]

John Healey: The UK runs a trade surplus in oil. In 2004 this surplus stood at £2 billion. In the same period, exports of oil accounted for 8.3 per cent. of total UK goods exports and 5.8 per cent. of total UK goods and services exports. The following table includes figures showing oil exports as a percentage of total exports from 1999–2004.

Oil exports, value

	Share of total goods exports (percentage)	*Share of total goods and services exports (percentage)*	*Trade balance in oil (£ million)*
1999	6.1	4.6	4,448
2000	6.5	4.9	6,536
2001	6.0	4.4	5,579
2002	4.3	3.0	5,738
2003	5.5	3.8	4,124
2004	8.3	5.8	1,954

Source:
Office for National Statistics

HM Treasury does not publish forecasts for trade in oil.

Pensions (Tax Relief)

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the cost of tax relief on pensions in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by each area of relief; and if he will make a statement. [965]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Latest estimates of the annual cost of tax relief on private pensions are available on Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs website at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/pensions/table7_9_september04.pdf

These estimates take account of the relief given on contributions to personal, stakeholder and occupational pensions and the investment income of funds, net of tax on existing private pensions in payment.

Stamp Duty

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue has been raised from stamp duty on *(a)* residential properties and *(b)* commercial properties in each year since 1997. [1097]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Estimates of stamp duty revenues raised in the UK in 1997–98 for residential and commercial transaction types are as follows:

	£ million
(a) Residential	830
(b) Commercial	665

Estimates for available years from 1998–99 are given at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/stamp_duty/table15_3_october04.pdf

Tax Credit Overpayments

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Paymaster General will reply to the letter of 10 March 2005 from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak on overpayments of tax credits to constituents. [401]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Unemployment Rates

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many of the 20 parliamentary constituencies with the highest unemployment rates in 1997 there were increases in the unemployment rate between 1997 and 2005; and if he will make a statement. [972]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Laws, dated 26 May 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment rates. (972)

Of the 20 parliamentary constituencies in Great Britain with the highest unemployment rates in 1997–98, none showed an increase between then and 2003–04. This is based on annual local area Labour Force Survey data which, as with any statistical sample survey, is subject to sampling variability.

ONS also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas. Of the 20 parliamentary constituencies with the highest proportion of claimants of JSA expressed as a percentage of the resident working age population in April 1997, none had a higher proportion in April 2005.

VAT

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures he *(a)* has implemented and *(b)* proposes to implement to reduce the rate of VAT for home improvements relating to (i) energy conservation and (ii) installation of renewable energy technologies. [75]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government are committed to improving household efficiency as part of their programme to meet the Energy White Paper targets and see the use of economic instruments as an effective way to implement environmental policy.

Under agreements with our European partners that govern the VAT system, we can apply a reduced rate of VAT of no lower than 5 per cent. on goods and services from within a prescribed list in the Sixth VAT Directive (Annex H). To date the Government have applied a reduced rate of 5 per cent. to the contractual installation of energy-saving materials such as insulation materials, heating controls, solar panels and ground source heat pumps and to the grant funded installation of renewable source heating systems.

The Government also have a long-standing commitment to pursue an amendment to the Sixth VAT Directive to permit a reduced rate of VAT for the purchase of energy-saving materials for do-it-yourself installation and the purchase of energy efficient products. Negotiations on these changes are ongoing.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Antisocial Behaviour

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government is taking to tackle antisocial behaviour in schools. [315]

Jacqui Smith: The Government's Improving Behaviour and Attendance Programme plays a crucial part in the drive to reduce antisocial behaviour in schools. We have a range of measures in place to reduce truancy and poor behaviour and reinforce parental responsibility for their child's behaviour. They include in-school Learning Support Units, multi-agency Behaviour and Education Support Teams, key workers for children at risk of crime, police in schools, and positive activity programmes in the school holidays. The programme also includes training for all school staff in managing pupil behaviour and preventing violence, as part of the Secondary National Strategy and Primary pilot. And we are encouraging schools to begin working together in collaborations to jointly tackle behaviour and attendance issues, greatly reducing the problems of persistent truancy and disruptive behaviour through early intervention and shared resources.

In addition, the Anti-social Behaviour Act, which came into force in February 2004, has introduced penalty notices and parenting contracts for truancy and parenting contracts and orders for bad behaviour in schools.

We also think it is important to tackle this through the school curriculum, where pupils learn about socially responsible behaviour as part of Citizenship education. And in primary schools, all pupils will soon have access to the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning materials, which we believe will contribute greatly to addressing the problems early and reducing antisocial behaviour both in and out of school.

Last week it was announced that a new Stakeholder Group, to be chaired by the Minister of State for Schools and 14–19 Learners, has been formed to establish a strong partnership between Government and key stakeholders in the area of discipline in schools; and an expert Practitioners group will advise these key stakeholders on a range of behaviour issues. The Practitioners group will bring together school leaders with real, front line experience of turning schools round.

Cheating

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are in place in *(a)* the state sector and *(b)* the private sector to prevent cheating in examinations or coursework leading to a qualification; what sanctions apply to those found to have cheated or assisted in cheating; and if she will make a statement. [469]

Jacqui Smith: The regulatory authorities for England, Wales and Northern Ireland have produced a Code of Practice which sets out the responsibilities of awarding bodies, centres and the regulatory authorities for the provision and administration of assessment, including coursework. The code applies to all GCSE, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA qualifications, regardless of what type of school or college they are taken in.

The regulatory authorities monitor the awarding bodies to ensure that they adhere strictly to the Code of Practice. The code requires each awarding body to make sure that teachers take steps to satisfy themselves that coursework is solely the pupil's work. Teachers must also present a written declaration that each candidate's work was carried out under the required conditions.

The Joint Council for Qualifications, on behalf of the awarding bodies, has also produced guidance for dealing with instances of suspected malpractice in examinations. The guidance is issued to all heads of centres, examination officers and others involved in managing examinations.

Where an investigation establishes malpractice by a member of staff, the awarding body has the right to impose special conditions on the future involvement in its examinations by that member of staff. An awarding body may refuse to accept examination entries from a centre in cases where malpractice is established. There are a range of sanctions and penalties that may be imposed on candidates found guilty of breaking the regulations. These range from a warning through to loss of marks for the coursework element, disqualification from the whole qualification or barring the candidate from entering one or more examinations for a set period of time.

City Academies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment the Government have made of the performance of the city academies. [395]

Jacqui Smith: Academies are replacing some of the poorest schools in the country, in the most disadvantaged areas. While it is still very early days in the development of the programme, Academies are already achieving success in raising educational standards, improving behaviour and attendance and in attracting applications.

Academies' most recent GCSE figures show improvements on average in the number of children gaining five or more good GCSEs: in 2003, their first year, the average 5+ A*-C GCSE results in the three open Academies was 24 per cent., compared to an average of 16 per cent. in their predecessor schools in 2002. The rate of improvement in Academies' Key Stage 3 results is outstripping the national average: for the 11 Academies reporting results in 2004—compared to those of their predecessor schools in 2001—KS3 English and maths results on average improved by nine percentage points (from 34 per cent. to 43 per cent., and 38 per cent. to 47 per cent.) compared to a six and seven percentage points increase nationally (from 65 per cent. to 71 per cent., and 66 per cent. to 73 per cent.).

We have also commissioned Pricewaterhouse Coopers to carry out an independent five-year longitudinal evaluation of the Academies programme. The study will be looking at the impact of Academies on children from disadvantaged areas and their families, and communities, and the extent to which Academies raise educational standards and aspirations. The first Annual Report in 2003 looked only at the three then open Academies. We will be publishing the second Annual Report soon.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 31 March with regard to Ms Frances Ives. [196]

Jacqui Smith: A response has been issued today.

Education (Hammersmith and Fulham)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many secondary schools are under special measures in the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. [853]

Jacqui Smith: There are two secondary schools in special measures in Hammersmith and Fulham. They are Burlington Danes Church of England school and Hurlingham and Chelsea secondary school.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions she has had with the Hammersmith and Fulham local education authority. [854]

Jacqui Smith: In the last week, my officials have discussed with officers of the authority measures to support improvement in schools in Hammersmith and Fulham, to support the LEA and academies policy.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to improve educational standards in Hammersmith and Fulham, with particular reference to schools under special measures. [855]

Jacqui Smith: There are no primary schools, and two secondary schools, in special measures in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Advisers in my Department have developed a close working relationship with the Hammersmith and Fulham local authority. We are working together to raise attainment, raise attendance and levels of participation in learning, raise levels of literacy, strengthen behaviour support, improve recruitment and retention and tackle under-performance throughout the secondary sector.

Eight secondary schools in Hammersmith and Fulham receive a Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) of £135,000 per school in 2005–06. This three-year grant, which began in April 2003, is designed to raise standards, strengthen leadership at all levels and stimulate collaboration to improve standards of teaching and learning across groups of schools. The authority also receives £40,000 per year as a School Improvement Adviser grant, which is designed to increase school improvement capacity within local authorities.

In addition, schools in Hammersmith and Fulham receive support from the London Challenge, focused, for example, on targeting year 11 pupils taking their GCSEs, and on supporting leadership at all levels. In each case, a London Challenge adviser works with the headteacher and local authority, through a School Improvement Partnership Board, to co-ordinate support for the school's improvement strategy.

FE Colleges

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects further education colleges to achieve parity of funding with schools. [1201]

Bill Rammell: We have brought up funding levels for Further Education (FE) as we said we would, without penalising schools. The Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) funding rates per course in FE have been rising faster than school sixth forms and the gap has narrowed.

Our policy is to raise the level of funding for colleges, as and when we are able to secure the resources to do so.

Free School Meals

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money is provided by each local authority for each child eligible for a free school meal. [213]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not currently collected centrally.

Fresh Start

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools have been subject to the Fresh Start programme since its inception; and how many of these schools have been *(a)* closed and *(b)* converted to academies. [750]

Jacqui Smith: 44 Schools have been included in the Government's Fresh Start programme so far, including three which are to open in September. Two Fresh Start schools have closed and one more is due to close this year. None has converted to an academy, but there are plans for Corby Community College in Northamptonshire to become an academy from September 2007.

Homophobic Abuse/Bullying

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Department is taking to combat homophobic abuse and bullying in schools. [541]

Jacqui Smith: Tackling homophobic bullying in schools is an issue which is taken seriously by the Department; as with any other kind of bullying it cannot be tolerated. We must challenge homophobic language and attitudes wherever we find them and support our children and young people to do the same.

In November 2004, we organised, in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), the first ever National Anti-Bullying Week which had a strong emphasis on combating homophobic bullying. During the week Stephen Twigg attended the 5th birthday celebration of the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Award for Young People, where he announced a new Diana Anti-bullying Award, for which we have given funding of £50,000. At this event, he also launched new guidance for schools entitled "Stand Up for Us: Challenging Homophobia in Schools" which was prepared by the National Healthy Schools Standard with considerable input from the Department. Stand Up For Us sets out a practical approach for schools to assess quickly the scale of homophobic bullying they face. And it offers practical steps schools can take to create an environment where everyone can feel welcome and valued and where specific instances of bullying are identified, challenged and dealt with effectively.

During anti bullying week, we also published "Homophobia, Sexual Orientation and Schools: a review and implications for action". This review, by the Thomas Coram Research Unit, looks at three areas: behaviour and bullying; teaching and learning about sexual orientation and relationships; and employment issues. It collates, summarises and assesses both peer reviewed research material, from this country and abroad, and less formal work conducted by bodies active in this area. It also reports the views of a wide range of organisations, 28 in all, with an interest in this area to paint a picture of how the issues are currently perceived. The report is available on the DfES website http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research and the findings will be used to inform future work in this area.

The Departments work in this critical area is on-going and we supported Schools Out in promoting the first Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month in February 2005, and have funded the development of a website which will raise awareness and encourage participation. The website suggested activities and events that schools, colleges, universities, libraries, museums, galleries, archives, and theatres could organise and offered teachers specific lesson plans and assembly suggestions to encourage and support schools in marking LGBT History Month. It also provided an online notice board of events and link to current news relevant to LGBT History Month.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Department plans to introduce a requirement for every school to have a policy to deal with homophobic bullying. [547]

Jacqui Smith: The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires that maintained schools have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. In addition, 'Don't Suffer in Silence' the Department's anti-bullying guidance to schools advises that explicit reference be made to homophobic bullying and racist bullying in this policy. The guidance also offers a range of strategies to counter all forms of bullying and create an environment in which all members of the school community can thrive, and feel respected, safe and secure.

The DfES Five Year Strategy states our expectation that all schools will sign up to the Anti Bullying Charter for Action, which is a voluntary commitment to creating a school community where bullying is not tolerated, and is signed by the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors and a Pupils' Representative. The anti-bullying Charter, which includes specific reference to homophobic bullying, went to every maintained school in England and is accompanied by a summary of effective practice to help schools review and enhance their anti-bullying policies.

Illiteracy

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students left secondary school without being able to read and write between 1997 and 2004. [327]

Jacqui Smith: Data are not recorded in the way the question asks, but the percentage of 15-year-old pupils in all schools achieving A*-G in GCSE English has improved from 88.5 per cent. in 1996/97 to 91 per cent. in 2003/04. However we should not draw the conclusion that those who do not achieve a GCSE grade in English are not able to read and write. The figures are set out in the following table.

Time Series—GCSE achievements of 15-year-old pupils in all schools 1997/2004

	Number of 15-year-old pupils[1]	*Percentage achieving A*-G in GCSE English*
2003/04	643,574	91.0
2002/03	622,122	91.5
2001/02	606,554	91.0
2000/01	603,318	91.0
1999/2000	580,393	91.9
1998/99	580,972	91.4
1997/98	575,210	89.5
1996/97	586,766	88.5

[1] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

Key Stage 2

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the national curriculum assessment revised results at key stage 2 are for *(a)* reading, *(b)* writing and *(c)* English. [1092]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is as shown:

Percentage of pupils achieving expected level or above in 2003–04

	Level 4 or above	*Percentage Level 5*
Provisional data		
Reading	83	39
Writing	63	17
English	77	27
Revised data		
English	78	27

Pastry Chefs (Degrees)

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many universities offer degrees in cooking pastry that qualify people to become pastry chefs. [909]

Bill Rammell: The information is not held centrally. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service's website currently lists 16 universities and colleges which offer courses in culinary arts or management, but it does not include detailed descriptions of the content of these courses.

PISA Survey

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which organisation will be conducting the next round of the PISA survey. [582]

Jacqui Smith: Following a competitive tendering exercise in 2004, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was appointed to administer PISA 2006 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Scottish Executive conducted a separate exercise and has appointed The SCRE Centre, University of Glasgow to run the study in Scotland.

Plumbing Courses

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what central funding is provided for training courses in plumbing in Hertfordshire; and if she will make a statement. [770]

Phil Hope: Central Government make a substantial investment in skills development through local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) who determine how public funding for training is allocated in their area. The latest available figures for the Hertfordshire LSC do not separately identify plumbing. The LSC is currently providing £2,398,803 overall for learning in the construction trades, including plumbing. Construction has been identified as a high priority area by the Hertfordshire LSC for 2005/06.

Racial Abuse (Schools)

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps she is taking to protect those attending schools and other learning institutions from *(a)* racial abuse, *(b)* harassment and *(c)* assault; and if she will make a statement; [769]

(2) what measures she is taking to protect teachers from physical and verbal assault from *(a)* students and *(b)* parents; and if she will make a statement. [778]

Jacqui Smith: The great majority of schools are safe and orderly places. But we are determined to reduce the risk of abuse and violence to an absolute minimum. To achieve that we have:

given every secondary school access to high-quality behaviour management training materials and expert advice from behaviour management consultants;

funded extra support for schools facing the greatest challenges through our Excellence in Cities and Behaviour Improvement Programmes;

provided £120 million for school security improvements since 1997;

supported schools to ban aggressive parents from the site and have them removed and prosecuted if they flout the ban; and

helped to establish over 400 Safer Schools Partnerships that base police officers in schools.

In addition, we are:

giving every primary school access to high-quality training and curriculum materials for developing pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills and developing similar materials for secondary schools;

developing specific violence prevention advice and training with associations representing heads and other school staff;

working with the Home Office on legislation to give heads the power to search pupils for offensive weapons; and

establishing an expert group of heads and teachers to consider what else the Government, local authorities, school staff and parents can do to promote discipline and a culture of respect in all schools.

School of Oriental and African Studies

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received regarding reported intimidation experienced by Jewish students at the School of Oriental and African Studies; and if she will make a statement. [419]

Bill Rammell: I have seen a dossier of complaints about alleged anti-Semitic incidents at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). I have also seen copies of correspondence from the Principal of SOAS in response to some of these complaints.

The Government deplores racism in all its forms. While universities are autonomous institutions which operate independently of Government, we have acted to ensure there is adequate protection in law against all forms of racism on campus. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on the governing bodies of universities to promote race equality in their institutions. This duty applies to all of a governing body's functions, including its obligations in respect of the running of student unions under the Education Act 1994, and its obligations in respect of freedom of speech under the Education (No 2) Act 1986.

I welcome the fact that the Equality Challenge Unit (an independent, HE sector funded group) is looking at the issue of extremism and intolerance on campus with a view to updating guidance to universities.

School Repairs

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the backlog of repairs is for each local education authority. [758]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows school buildings maintenance requirements for each English local education authority. The figures are derived from data supplied to the Department by authorities, based on their condition assessments. In addition to backlog repair work, the figures cover work needed over a five year period from the dates of the assessments, including cyclical and scheduled maintenance.

Central Government capital support for investment in schools has increased from under £700 million in 1996–97 to £5.5 billion this year and will rise further to £6.3 billion by 2007–08. Progress is being made year-by-year in improving the quality of the school building stock.

Schools maintenance requirements

	£
Barking and Dagenham	44,222,497
Barnet	58,603,516
Barnsley	47,377,891
Bath and North East Somerset	17,672,104
Bedfordshire	74,270,969
Bexley	35,247,167
Birmingham	338,036,375
Blackburn with Darwen	26,590,050
Blackpool	21,402,538
Bolton	44,117,191
Bournemouth	13,262,327
Bracknell Forest	14,343,860
Bradford	112,036,642
Brent	33,459,172
Brighton and Hove	21,667,673
Bristol, City of	77,466,174
Bromley	39,801,557
Buckinghamshire	54,121,211
Bury	42,449,317
Calderdale	37,353,404
Cambridgeshire	39,569,409
Camden	17,268,774
Cheshire	66,938,233
City of London	[1]—
Cornwall	146,972,745
Coventry	31,478,511
Croydon	22,269,907
Cumbria	82,161,197
Darlington	22,193,948
Derby	56,113,188
Derbyshire	129,542,559
Devon	87,228,805
Doncaster	59,152,824
Dorset	73,090,426
Dudley	22,261,560
Durham	106,241,188
Ealing	37,065,046
East Riding of Yorkshire	99,490,815
East Sussex	28,509,456
Enfield	39,640,750
Essex	197,634,312
Gateshead	22,732,259
Gloucestershire	51,072,003
Greenwich	49,286,654
Hackney	42,775,383
Halton	26,868,923
Hammersmith and Fulham	17,079,357
Hampshire	240,085,181
Haringey	39,297,795

Schools maintenance requirements

	£
Harrow	23,790,537
Hartlepool	15,007,057
Havering	48,416,933
Herefordshire	16,897,205
Hertfordshire	75,086,217
Hillingdon	25,770,287
Hounslow	44,954,654
Isles of Scilly	[1]—
Isle of Wight	15,539,240
Islington	27,481,974
Kensington and Chelsea	7,199,700
Kent	166,504,199
Kingston upon Hull, City of	53,394,655
Kingston upon Thames	32,425,060
Kirklees	97,452,943
Knowsley	25,520,785
Lambeth	74,926,820
Lancashire	244,291,587
Leeds	136,625,524
Leicester	39,445,204
Leicestershire	102,188,829
Lewisham	44,676,681
Lincolnshire	72,040,420
Liverpool	32,976,859
Luton	33,314,852
Manchester	87,231,469
Medway	43,669,885
Merton	17,662,950
Middlesbrough	40,918,539
Milton Keynes	20,583,973
Newcastle upon Tyne	85,592,912
Newham	33,628,011
Norfolk	92,413,508
North East Lincolnshire	56,234,100
North Lincolnshire	22,126,151
North Somerset	36,242,355
North Tyneside	21,895,120
North Yorkshire	100,547,176
Northamptonshire	84,661,298
Northumberland	57,273,727
Nottingham	47,910,920
Nottinghamshire	113,001,142
Oldham	60,592,182
Oxfordshire	67,260,167
Peterborough	32,021,378
Plymouth	74,267,325
Poole	16,773,163
Portsmouth	26,686,671
Reading	22,783,119
Redbridge	33,523,467
Redcar and Cleveland	19,607,080
Richmond upon Thames	18,836,344
Rochdale	43,838,994
Rotherham	51,240,253
Rutland	4,164,651
Salford	38,994,416
Sandwell	35,947,806
Sefton	88,101,684
Sheffield	128,032,809
Shropshire	26,834,447
Slough	18,40[illegible],704
Solihull	23,165,245
Somerset	66,163,207
South Gloucestershire	42,445,864
South Tyneside	35,563,408
Southampton	16,380,584
Southend-on-Sea	16,468,874
Southwark	36,191,627
St. Helens	27,343,605
Staffordshire	119,230,578
Stockport	61,495,833
Stockton-on-Tees	42,563,198
Stoke-on-Trent	3,747,091
Suffolk	66,808,033
Sunderland	38,582,178
Surrey	111,580,199
Sutton	15,502,302
Swindon	25,127,638
Tameside	34,346,720
Telford and Wrekin	29,263,278
Thurrock	29,794,067
Torbay	6,925,565
Tower Hamlets	19,165,134
Trafford	17,098,082
Wakefield	55,601,652
Walsall	72,001,847
Waltham Forest	20,412,472
Wandsworth	44,993,672
Warrington	53,194,121
Warwickshire	144,361,958
West Berkshire	20,475,147
West Sussex	87,345,791
Westminster	20,360,584
Wigan	67,365,979
Wiltshire	74,824,346
Windsor and Maidenhead	22,786,267
Wirral	45,602,149
Wokingham	26,334,926
Wolverhampton	53,234,172
Worcestershire	65,016,251
York	41,611,318

[1] These small authorities were not asked to supply data.

Schools (Hertfordshire)

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to increase parental choice at *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school levels in Hertfordshire; and if she will make a statement. [780]

Jacqui Smith: This Government is wholeheartedly committed to the principle of real choice for parents and pupils so that they can choose between excellent local schools, including those with a distinctive ethos or specialism. Parents have the right to express a preference for whatever school they wish their child to attend and we want as many parents as possible to be able to send their child to their preferred school.

School admission authorities have a statutory duty to comply with parental preference, unless a particular school is oversubscribed, in which case places must be allocated according to the published admission arrangements.

We have introduced a number of measures to make it easier for the best schools to expand in line with parental demand including making dedicated capital funding available for the expansion of successful and popular secondary schools. Schools wishing to expand must follow a statutory process—consulting interested parties and publishing a statutory notice. The final decision is taken by the local School Organisation Committee (SOC) or an independent Schools Adjudicator. Our guidance to SOCs and adjudicators makes it clear that there is a presumption in favour of approving proposals to expand a successful and popular school.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she is taking to reduce secondary school class sizes in Hertfordshire; and if she will make a statement. [787]

Jacqui Smith: There is no national limit for secondary school classes as there is for infant classes of five, six and seven-year-olds. The average size of secondary school classes taught by one teacher nationally is 21.7. In Hertfordshire the average is 20.8. Only 8.7 per cent. of Hertfordshire's secondary classes have more than 30 pupils and there are no classes at all above 35 pupils.

Decisions about secondary class sizes are a matter for each school, using their delegated budget as they consider best. The funding that individual schools receive is a matter for local authorities through their locally agreed funding formulae and local authorities are best placed to know the needs and priorities of their schools. In terms of resourcing schools in Hertfordshire, in 2005–06 Hertfordshire have had an increase in their School Formula Spending Share of 5.5 per cent. per pupil.

Sure Start

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the amount of funding for Sure Start centres which will be required from sources other than public funds in each financial year up to 2015; and from where funding is expected to come. [979]

Beverley Hughes: Local authorities will have the responsibility to develop children's centres to meet the needs of their communities building on existing provision such as Sure Start Local Programmes, neighbourhood nurseries and primary schools. Local authorities were given their funding allocations for children's centres in early April. The Department has not estimated how much additional funding will be given to children's centres from sources other than public funds. However centres will provide services that have grown from a range of existing provisions which have a number of funding streams eg health services, Jobcentre-Plus, family support and early education. They will also often include private sector funded services such as childcare nurseries or training of staff. Centres would also be able to generate additional revenues by charging parents for some of their services such as childcare.

Teacher Recruitment

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the recruitment figures were in each local education authority for *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary teachers in the last year for which figures are available; and how many unfilled vacancies there were in each. [765]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she is taking to assist Hertfordshire's schools to recruit and retain teachers; and if she will make a statement. [767]

Jacqui Smith: From September 2000, £6,000 training bursaries are being paid to eligible students on Postgraduate Certificate in Education courses that lead to qualified teacher status. For those who train in and then go on to teach in one of the priority subject areas, a £4,000 Golden Hello payment is made after induction has been completed. Since 2000, there has been a 9 per cent. increase in teacher numbers in Hertfordshire—from 9,030 in 2000 to 9,820 in 2004.

Other measures have been introduced to aid the retention of these teachers, including a "National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload" which sets out a number of measures designed to tackle teacher workload including a concerted attack on unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy.

The Teacher Training Agency is also contributing to the salary costs of a recruitment manager in Hertfordshire local education authority until March 2007, to help schools in the area with their recruitment and retention strategies.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she is taking to increase the pool of mathematics and science teachers available to secondary schools; and if she will make a statement. [776]

Jacqui Smith: From September 2000, £6,000 training bursaries are being paid to eligible students on Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses that lead to qualified teacher status. £4,000 Golden Hellos are also available to those who go on to teach priority subjects, including mathematics and science, in a maintained school after successful completion of an induction year. For those taking mathematics or science PGCE courses from September 2005, these incentives will each be increased by £1,000.

The Teacher Training Agency has also developed subject enhancement courses in mathematics, chemistry and physics to enable those without degrees primarily in those subjects to enter Initial Teacher Training in mathematics or science.

Teacher Retirement

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on preserving the right of teachers to retire at 60 years of age; and if she will make a statement. [768]

Jacqui Smith: The Government are committed to the continued provision of high quality pension arrangements for teachers that are affordable, reflect the challenges of continuing improvements in life expectancy and are justifiable to the tax payer. The current review of the Teachers' Pension Scheme is being conducted within that framework, but with the firm commitment that teachers will still be able to choose to retire at, before or after age 60.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Marginal Withdrawal Rates

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people face marginal withdrawal rates higher than *(a)* 50 per cent., *(b)* 60 per cent., *(c)* 70 per cent., and *(d)* 80 per cent. when they come off benefits and go into work; and if he will make a statement. [968]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

This information is not available.

Benefit Payment

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment his Department has made of the difficulties faced by individuals with mental health problems in receiving benefits into bank accounts. [868]

Mr. Plaskitt: More than 95 per cent. of people are paid into a bank, building society or Post Office card account. (This figure includes benefits paid to customers with mental health problems, such as disability living allowance and incapacity benefit.)

Independent research for DWP has shown that more than nine out of ten customers (again including those receiving benefits paid to people with mental health problems) were satisfied with having payments made directly into their account.

There is now a range of easy to operate basic bank accounts and the Post Office card account available. These have limited features and are suitable for those people who, for example, feel they cannot operate a traditional high street bank account (perhaps because they are concerned about becoming overdrawn).

However, we always recognised that there would be a small number of people who we could not pay into any sort of account, including some of those with mental health problems. These customers are paid by DWP cheque which they can cash over the counter at a Post Office branch. We wanted to ensure that we properly met the needs of those vulnerable customers who we could not pay into an account, and settled on cheque payments following extensive discussions with customer representative groups—including Mind (the leading mental health charity). For example, cheque payments offer the flexibility to pay people with mental heath problems for a short period until they feel that they are able to manage a bank account again.

Post Office Card Accounts

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what contingency plans are in place to ensure continuity of payments to holders of Post Office card accounts, when the computer system fails. [146]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Post Office card account is a Post Office banking service and Post Office Ltd is responsible for ensuring that its computer systems are robust and that it provides a reliable service to card account customers. The accounts are regulated by the Financial Services Authority like any bank account.

The Department has close contact with Post Office Ltd to ensure that in the event of a system failure, action to restore the service quickly is taken in line with comprehensive business continuity arrangements. These arrangements have been agreed between Post Office Ltd and DWP, the Revenue and Customs and the Northern Ireland Social Security Agency.

Where exceptionally the Post Office system is unavailable, there are contingency arrangements for Post Office Ltd to pay emergency payments of up to £20 per day to customers until systems are restored.

Those customers unable to manage until systems are restored are instructed to contact the office that pays their benefit or pension.

HEALTH

Cancer

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research the Government are funding to combat cancer. [307]

Jane Kennedy: The international cancer research portfolio database at www.cancerportfolio.org contains details of projects supported by cancer research funding organisations in the United Kingdom and the United States. Data submitted by the National Cancer Research Institute includes the research portfolios of its 15 partners, which is the largest Government and charitable funder of cancer research in the UK. The database can be searched by type of cancer, area of research, and funding organisation.

Charing Cross Hospital

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many beds were available for use in the Charing Cross hospital on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many were available in *(a)* 1992, *(b)* 1997 and *(c)* 2001. [799]

Jane Kennedy: This data are not collected by individual hospitals, but is collected by national health service trusts. Beds data are collected on a financial year basis and the latest figures available are for 2003–04. Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust was not formed until 1994; therefore, the Department does not hold any figures for 1992. The data shown in the table is for Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust, of which Charing Cross hospital is a part.

	Beds available
2003–04	1,037
2001–02	1,056
1997–98	1,141

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the future of Charing Cross hospital. [801]

Jane Kennedy: It is for primary care trusts in partnership with the local health economy to plan and improve services for their local population. I understand Hammersmith Hospitals National Health Service Trust is currently exploring options about how it will manage its estate over the next 10 years. As yet, the trust has no clear plans, but I understand that the process will involve a range of internal and external partners in drawing up a solution, which would then be subject to a full and thorough public consultation.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to visit Charing Cross hospital. [802]

Jane Kennedy: There are no plans to undertake a visit to Charing Cross hospital.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what discussions she has had with the Hammersmith hospitals NHS trust about the Charing Cross hospital; [806]

(2) what discussions her predecessor had with the Hammersmith hospitals NHS trust in regard to the Charing Cross hospital. [812]

Jane Kennedy: Neither the Secretary of State nor her predecessor have had discussions with Hammersmith hospitals national health service trust about the Charing Cross hospital.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many operations were postponed in the Charing Cross hospital in *(a)* 1992, *(b)* 1997, *(c)* 2001 and *(d)* 2004. [809]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not collect data on postponed operations. Figures for cancelled operations for non clinical reasons are collected, but by national health service trust and not by individual hospital. Figures for Hammersmith hospitals NHS trust, of which Charing Cross hospital is a part, are shown in the following table.

Cancelled operations for non clinical reasons

	Hammersmith hospitals NHS trust
1992–93	n/a
1997–98[1]	n/a
2001–02	553
2003–04	390
2004–05[2]	[3]—

[1] Data are not collected for individual hospitals. Data was collected by health authority only prior to 2001–02. Trust level data was collected from 2001–02 onwards.

[2] 2004–05 data is not yet available. Instead, the latest published 2003–04 data is shown in the table.

[3] To be published end of May 2005.

Notes:

1. A last minute cancellation is one that occurs on the day the patient was due to arrive, after they have arrived in hospital or on the day of their operation. For example, a patient is to be admitted to hospital on a Monday for an operation scheduled for the following day (Tuesday). If the hospital cancels the operation for non-clinical reasons on the Monday, then this would count as a last minute cancellation. This includes patients who have not actually arrived in hospital and have been telephoned at home prior to their arrival. An operation which is rescheduled to a time within 24 hours of the original scheduled operation should be recorded as a postponement and not as a cancellation. The QMCO collection does not record the number of postponements.
2. Some common non-clinical reasons for cancellations by the hospital include: ward beds unavailable; surgeon unavailable; emergency case needing theatre; theatre list over-ran; equipment failure; administration error; anaesthetist unavailable; theatre staff unavailable; and critical care bed unavailable.

Source:

Department of Health dataset QMCO.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make a statement on the *(a)* readiness and *(b)* capability of Charing Cross hospital to act as the Trauma Centre for west London; [828]

(2) what discussions she has had with the Hammersmith hospitals NHS trust regarding the status of Charing Cross hospital as a major trauma centre. [829]

Jane Kennedy: The Secretary of State has had no discussions with Hammersmith hospitals national health service trust regarding the status of Charing Cross hospital as a major trauma centre. Charing Cross hospital provides a wide range of specialist skills and services, which enable it to deal with major incidents. However, it has no official status as the trauma centre for west London.

Complex Regional Pain Syndrome

Mr. Lansley: T[illegible]k the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps she is taking to improve the treatment and care of those patients with complex regional pain syndrome; [225]

(2) if she will conduct a review to ensure that the NHS has implemented the recommendations of the report of the Clinical Standards Advisory Group on pain services of March 2000; and if she will make a statement. [229]

Jane Kennedy: The Department welcomed the clinical standards advisory group report on pain services, published in April 2000, that made recommendations to trusts and commissioners to review local provision of pain services. Implementation of these recommendations lies with the local national health service trusts and commissioners.

It remains the responsibility of primary care trusts to commission services for people with pain, taking account of resources they have available and the needs of their wider populations. Therefore, the quality of services should be monitored locally to ensure it is provided to meet the needs of the local population.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has reviewed pain management techniques as part of the supportive and palliative care guidance, published in March 2004. This provides a clearer idea of what therapies are effective. This guidance is available on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk/pdf/csgspmanual.pdf.

The Department has no plans to review the provision of pain services in the NHS.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding her Department has made available in each year since 1997 for research into complex regional pain syndrome. [226]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not available.

The main part of the Department's expenditure on health research is allocated to and managed by national health service organisations. Details of individual projects supported in the NHS, including a number concerned with complex regional pain syndrome, can be found on the National Research Register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Congestion Charge

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what discussions she has had with the Mayor of London regarding implications of the proposed westwards extension of the congestion charge for patients travelling from outside the zone's border to the Chelsea and Westminster hospital for treatment; [1145]

(2) what recent discussions she has had with the Mayor of London. [1146]

Jane Kennedy: The Secretary of State has had no recent discussion with the Mayor of London. However, Professor Sue Atkinson, regional director of public health (London), is the Department's health advisor to the Mayor and the Greater London Authority. Professor Atkinson meets regularly with the Mayor and his advisers and has raised the proposed congestion charge zone extension with the Mayor at these meetings.

I understand the public consultation on the extension of the scheme is underway and closes on 15 July 2005.

A leaflet about public consultation on the extension is available at: www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/cc-ex/pdfs/wez_Leaflet.pdf

Digital Hearing Aids

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* average, *(b)* maximum and *(c)* target waiting time for (i) audiology appointments and (ii) the fitting of digital hearing aids were in the last period for which figures are available. [938]

Mr. Byrne: Median waiting times for ear, nose and throat (ENT) and audiological medicine are shown in the table. Data on waiting times for the fitting of digital hearing aids are not centrally collected.

For all specialties, the maximum waiting time for a first out-patient appointment with a consultant, following general practitioner referral, is 17 weeks. By the end of 2005, this will be reduced to a maximum of 13 weeks.

By 2008, the maximum wait will be just 18 weeks from referral to start of treatment. This includes waits for outpatient consultation, diagnostic tests and treatment.

Main specialty	*Median waiting time in days*
120—ENT	75.0
310—Audiological medicine	32.5

Notes:

1. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls (i.e., the data is ungrossed).
2. A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the datayear. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
3. Care is needed when analysing HES data by specialty, or by groups of specialties (such as acute). Trusts have different ways of managing specialties and attributing codes, so it is better to analyse by specific diagnoses, operations or other recorded information.
4. Time waited statistics from hospital episode statistics (HES) are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period, whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Source:

HES, Health and Social Care Information Centre.

European Working Time Directive

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact of the European working time directive (EWTD) *(a)* on the NHS in general and *(b)* on the ability of junior doctors to recognise and manage critical illness; and if she will make a statement on the steps being taken to redraft the EWTD in order to reverse the SIMAP and Jaeger rulings. [299]

Mr. Byrne: Implementation of the working time directive (WTD) is a local national health service matter, but we know that the vast majority of trusts achieved compliance across all specialities by 1 August 2004, although a small number of trusts experienced some initial problems in a limited number of specialities.

The United Kingdom, together with most member states, continues to press for changes to the WTD to address the difficulties from the SIMAP and Jaeger judgments. The Government will continue to seek to negotiate an acceptable agreement with member states and the European Commission.

General Practitioners

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many out-of-hours general practitioners there are per thousand of the population in *(a)* the area covered by South Gloucestershire primary care trust, *(b)* the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire strategic health authority and *(c)* England. [645]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 23 May 2005]*: The information is not collected by the Department. It is for individual primary care trusts to ensure out-of-hours provision in their areas.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* single-handed GP practices and *(b)* two-partner GP practices there are in Chiltern and South Bucks Primary Care Trust area at the latest date for which statistics are available; and what percentage these practices represent of the total number of GP practices in the primary care trust area. [805]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

Number of practices by partnership size[1] for Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust—England as at 30 September 2004

	5G4 Chiltern and South Bucks Primary Care Trust
Number (headcount)	
Total	23
Of which:	
Single-handed	4
Two-handed	3

Number of practices by partnership size[1] for Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust—England as at 30 September 2004

	5G4 Chiltern and South Bucks. Primary Care Trust
Percentage	
Single-handed	17
Two-handed	13

[1] Figures shown refer to general medical practitioners (excluding GP registrars and GP retainers).

Source:

National Health Service Health and Social Care Information Centre general and personal medical services statistics.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners in the Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Primary Care Trust area are within five years of retirement; and what percentage of the total this represents. [662]

Mr. Byrne: There is no prescribed retirement age for general practitioners. The table shows all general practitioners in the Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Primary Care Trust by age-band, as at September 2004.

General medical practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars) by age-band as at September 2004

	Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale primary care trust
NHS Plan GPs	134
Of which:	
Under 30	—
30–34	12
35–39	21
40–44	16
45–49	23
50–54	25
55–59	15
60–64	13
65–69	9
70 and over	—

Notes:

1. General medical practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars) includes contracted GPs, general medical service (GMS) others and personal medical service (PMS) others. Prior to September 2004, this group included GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (para. 52 SFA), PMS other, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.
2. Data as at 30 September 2004.

Source:

Department of Health GMS PMS statistics.

Hammersmith Hospital

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to visit Hammersmith Hospital. [810]

Jane Kennedy: I intend to visit the research and development department of Hammersmith Hospital in the near future.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the financial position of the Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust. [800]

Jane Kennedy: At the end of the financial year, Hammersmith Hospitals National Health Service Trust is reporting a significant financial deficit. Audited information in respect of the 2004–05 financial position of all strategic health authorities (SHAs), primary care trusts (PCTs) and NHS trusts will be published in their individual annual accounts and will be available centrally in autumn 2005. We have no plans to publish un-audited information.

NHS bodies must operate within their means and I understand North West London SHA are working closely with Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust and local PCT to find a solution. They are developing a recovery plan, the details of which are currently under discussion. As yet, there are no measures in the plan which will have a direct impact on patient services.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of emergency admissions in the Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust area are to *(a)* Charing Cross Hospital and *(b)* Hammersmith Hospital. [813]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is shown in the table.

Count of emergency in-year admission episodes for Hammersmith Hospitals National Health Service Trust (provider code—RQN)

	2003–04		*2002–03*	
Hospital site of treatment	*Emergency admissions*	*Percentage*	*Emergency admissions*	*Percentage*
Charing Cross Hospital	11,922	58.79	10,347	59.54
Hammersmith Hospital	8,348	41.17	7,022	40.41
Other	8	0.04	9	0.05
Total	20,278	100	17,378	100

	2001–02		*Total over 3 years*	
Hospital site of treatment	*Emergency admissions*	*Percentage*	*Emergency admissions*	*Percentage*
Charing Cross Hospital	9,511	58.48	31,780	58.94
Hammersmith Hospital	6,752	41.52	22,122	41.03
Other	0	0	17	0.03
Total	16,263	100	53,919	100

Notes:

1. Data split by site of treatment and the proportion of episodes are calculated as a percentage for each site.
2. Data provided for datayears 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04 and total figures calculated over the three datayears.
3. An in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the datayear. Periods of care ongoing at the end of the datayear (unfinished admission episodes) are included. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
4. Data quality—hospital episode statistics (HES) are compiled from data sent by over 300 NHS trusts and primary care trusts (PCTs) in England. The Health and Social Care Information Centre liaises closely with these organisations to encourage submission of complete and valid data and seeks to minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data via HES processes. While this brings about improvement over time, some shortcomings remain.
5. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Source:

HES, Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints *(a)* Hammersmith hospitals NHS Trust and *(b)* her Department has received in the last 12 months regarding the accessibility of Hammersmith hospital for (i) patients and (ii) staff. [826]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not collect this information.

Health Protection Agency

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Health Protection Agency is expected to publish the conclusions of its review of the law concerning the treatment of people with infectious diseases against their will. [542]

Caroline Flint: "Getting Ahead of the Curve", the infectious disease strategy published by the chief medical officer in January 2002, made clear our intention to review the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.

In preparation for the review, the Department has asked the Health Protection Agency (HPA) to consider how public health practitioners might make more effective use of the powers currently provided by the 1984 Act, and what difficulties practitioners find with the current powers and what changes might be desirable. We expect to receive the results of the first instalment of the HPA's work by the end of June 2005 and will want to consider with the HPA at that stage when and in what form it would be appropriate to publish the results of its work.

We will decide, in the light of work by the HPA and of other developments, such as the World Health Organisation's adoption of new international health regulations, how to take the review forward. Our aim will be to consider whether and how the law could be modernised to ensure protection of the public, while respecting the rights of the individual. If it seems that changes to the law would be desirable, we shall of course want to consult those affected before proceeding.

Health Service Complaints

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many case managers have been appointed to review health service complaints referred to the Healthcare Commission; how many such cases are outstanding; and if she will make a statement. [102]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 23 March 2005]*: The Healthcare Commission took on its role in handling the independent review stage of the national health service complaints process at the end of July 2004. I understand that there are currently 87 case managers working on independent review requests.

As at 23 May, the Commission had received 7,850 cases for review. Of these, 2,650 had been closed and reviews were being carried out on a further 2,650. 2,550 were being prepared for review.

Hospital Beds/Food

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the estimated change in numbers of hospital beds is between 2005 and 2010, broken down by strategic health authority. [985]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not estimate changes in hospital bed numbers. The latest capacity planning exercise, conducted in 2004, was designed to ensure there was sufficient activity in place to deliver the 2006–07 to 2007–08 public service agreements targets. The Departmental focus was on the levels of elective, non-elective and diagnostics activity planned by strategic health authorities rather than bed numbers.

Determination of the number of hospital beds required to deliver planned levels of activity set out in local delivery plans is the responsibility of the national health service locally.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her estimate is of the incidence of hospital-induced malnutrition in each year since 1997. [248]

Jane Kennedy: This data are not collected centrally. A number of strategies are in place to manage, monitor and screen patients for under-nutrition in hospitals, residential care and the wider community. Nutritional screening is recommended for the care of specific groups, as part of locally determined services.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals *(a)* built since 1997, *(b)* under construction and *(c)* planned do not have on-site kitchens. [249]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not collected centrally. The requirements of any new build and the operational policies for catering are for local determination between trusts and contractors.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of hospital meals are prepared on-site. [250]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not collected centrally in the exact format requested. Data collected from trusts as part of the annual estates related information collection (ERIC) is shown in the table. The term "conventional" refers to food prepared on site. In addition, some of the meals provided through "cook chill", "cook freeze" and "other" services will also be produced on site. We do not have data on the exact amount of food produced on site through these latter processes.

Percentage of patient meals by production service/method—2003–04

Production service/method	*Percentage*
Cook chill plated	6.67
Cook chill bulk	30.44
Conventional plated	30.99
Conventional bulk	20.59
Cook freeze plated	1.65
Cook freeze bulk	8.5
Other	1.14

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the better hospital food programme. [252]

Jane Kennedy: An assessment of the better hospital food (BHF) programme has been conducted by analysis of the results of patient environment action team (PEAT) visits, delivery against the BHF objectives and by national patient surveys.

All have shown improvement since the programme began. Figures are shown in the tables.

Table 1: Progress in terms of PEAT since 2001

(a) PEAT results 2002–03

	2002	2003
Red (poor)		
Number	14	0
Percentage	2	0
Amber (acceptable)		
Number	554	479
Percentage	81	56.3
Green (good)		
Number	118	372
Percentage	17	43.7

(b) PEAT results 2004

	2004
Excellent	
Number	92
Percentage	8
Good	
Number	574
Percentage	50
Acceptable	
Number	402
Percentage	35
Poor	
Number	67
Percentage	6
Unacceptable	
Number	7
Percentage	1

Table 2: Progress against the 2001 BHF objectives

			As at June:			
	2002		*2003*		*2004*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Ward kitchen services	256	72	320	89	332	89
Snack box service	210	59	254	71	295	79
Additional snacks	183	51	233	65	314	84
Main meal evening	280	78	327	92	349	94
Leading chef dishes	142	40	214	60	314	84

Table 3: The national patient survey percentages

	2001–02 (quarter 18)	*2003–04 (quarter 15)*
Base: All valid responses	(89,304)	(83,248)
Very good	18	18
Good	35	36
Fair	31	31
Poor	16	15
I did not have any hospital food	Not applicable	Not applicable

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will estimate the total expenditure on *(a)* food and *(b)* catering services in the NHS in each year since 1997. [261]

Jane Kennedy: This data are not collected in the exact form requested. The cost of provisions for patients and the total cost of catering from 2000–04 is shown in the table. Information was not collected prior to 2000.

		£ million
	Cost of provisions for patients[1]	*Total cost of catering*[2]
2000–01	108	405
2001–02	149	483
2002–03	162	553
2003–04	172	563

[1] The cost of provisions for patients includes foods, beverages, special diets and ward provisions such as bread, milk and coffee. It excludes parental and enteral feeding, baby milk and nutritional supplements.

[2] The total cost of catering includes pay, employer's national insurance and pension contributions for the manager responsible for catering services and all designated staff/deputies including administrative and clerical grades, but excludes the costs of ward housekeepers, it also includes the cost of provisions for patients and staff.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will estimate the proportion of hospital food wasted in the most recent period for which figures are available. [262]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not collected in the exact format requested. The latest figures on food waste in the form of untouched meals are shown in the table.

Untouched meals from 2001–02 to 2003–04

	Total patient main meals	*Total untouched meals*	*Percentage of meals untouched*
2001–02	141,127,010	12,498,786	8.86
2002–03	148,439,390	15,501,471	10.44
2003–04	162,364,553	17,396,869	10.71

Intensive Care

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what additional resources have been made available in each year since 1997 to support the provision of intensive care services; and what additional resources she plans to make available. [224]

Mr. Byrne: The Department made available £142.5 million additional funding specifically for critical care services in 2000–01 and 2001–02. These resources have now been incorporated into primary care trusts' financial baselines.

Over the three years of the 2004 spending review (2005–06 to 2007–08), national health service spend will increase by 23 per cent. in real terms. Over three years this will take the total spent on the NHS in England from £69 billion in 2004–05 to over £92 billion in 2007–08. It is for local health economies to make decisions on how to invest these growing resources in ways that most effectively respond to the needs and priorities of their local populations, including those relating to intensive care.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the practice of doctors at senior house officer level referring and accepting patients into intensive care units. [246]

Mr. Byrne: In May 2000, the Department issued "Comprehensive Critical Care—A Review of Adult Critical Care Services". This recommended that consultant medical staff should have responsibility for directing the overall plan of patient clinical care, direct supervision and teaching of trainee medical staff, internal and organisational (non-clinical) management and leadership of critical care services.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many intensive care beds there were in the NHS in each year since 1997; and what proportion of all available beds this represented in each year. [247]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has published data on intensive care provision on a six-monthly basis since March 1999. The information requested is shown in the table.

Number of open and staffed adult intensive care beds on the census day

Census date	*Intensive care beds*	*Proportion as a percentage of all available beds*
31 March 1999	1,520	0.8
30 September 1999	1,501	0.8
15 January 2000	1,555	0.8
14 July 2000	1,496	0.8
15 January 2001	1,677	0.9
16 July 2001	1,670	0.9
15 January 2002	1,711	0.9
16 July 2002	1,718	0.9
15 January 2003	1,746	0.9
16 July 2003	1,731	0.9
15 January 2004	1,769	1.0
15 July 2004	1,746	[1]—
13 January 2005	1,787	[1]—

[1] Data not yet available.

Notes:

1. Data on all available beds data (KH03) are collected annually.
2. Data on all available beds data for July 2004 and January 2005 are not yet available.
3. Day only beds have been excluded.

Source:

Department of Health forms KH03a, KH03

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to produce a single model for the provision of outreach services in intensive care; and if she will make a statement on the actions being taken to address the concerns reported in the 2005 report of the National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death, An Acute Problem. [260]

Mr. Byrne: It is for health professionals working in local health services to provide intensive care services in ways that best meet the needs of their local populations and there are no plans to produce a single uniform model for the provision of outreach services. The Department promotes the development of outreach services and recommends that they are available in every appropriate hospital 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

The Government welcomes the report of the national confidential enquiry into patient outcome and death (NCEPOD). The report reinforces the importance of the service improvements and developments that have been taking place in recent years, supported by the critical care modernisation programme that the Department launched in May 2000. Every hospital with a critical care services is now included in one of 29 critical care networks that work to locally agreed common standards and protocols, supporting improvements in service standards and assisting commissioners and providers in planning service provision. The Department, working closely with the critical care stakeholders' forum, will continue to support the national health service in developing critical care services, taking into account the recommendations of the NCEPOD report.

IVF Treatment

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the availability of IVF treatment on the NHS as at 1 April; and if she will make a statement. [264]

Caroline Flint: Following the publication in February 2004 of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's clinical guideline on the assessment and treatment for people with fertility problems, we advised all primary care trusts (PCTs) to offer a minimum of one cycle of "in-vitro fertilisation" (IVF) by April 2005 to those who meet the clinical criteria, and to make progress to full implementation of the guideline in the longer term. The survey of PCTs, conducted by the National Infertility Awareness Campaign and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Infertility, published on 1 April 2005, indicates that good progress is being made towards a minimum national level of provision of one cycle of IVF to eligible patients.

Mobile Phones

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research the Government have *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the health effects of mobile phones on people in rural areas; and what plans the Government have to issue guidance on those effects. [539]

Caroline Flint: The LINK mobile telecommunications and health research (MTHR) programme, funded jointly by Government and industry, is providing support for about 30 individual studies into potential health effects of mobile phone technology. Although none of these is specifically comparing rural and urban use, the population studies under this programme are designed to find out if there is an association between mobile phone use and ill health. The MTHR research is described on its website at www.mthr.org.uk.

Evaluation of worldwide research on possible health effects of mobile phone use is undertaken in this country by the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and its independent advisory group on non-ionising radiation (AGNIR). The substantial review by AGNIR in 2003, entitled, "Health Effects from Radiofrequency Fields (RF)", concluded that:

> "The weight of evidence now available does not suggest that there are adverse health effects from exposures to RF fields below guideline levels, but the published research on RF exposures and health have limitations, and mobile phones have only been in widespread use for a relatively short time".

The HPA keeps the health effects under continual review. The information is available on its website at www.hpa.org.uk/radiation/.

The Department's advice remains as stated in the "Mobile phones and Health" leaflets: people can choose to minimise their exposure if they wish, but for children in particular, the advice is to limit mobile phones use for essential purposes only and keep calls short.

MRSA

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of MRSA there were in each hospital in the UK in the last five years for which figures are available. [212]

Jane Kennedy: Information on the number of methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) blood stream infections is not available by hospital as requested. However, mandatory surveillance began in April 2001 and results are published by individual trust This information is available on the Department's website at:

> www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/PublicationsStatisticsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_10=4085951&chk=HBt2QD.

The national totals are shown in the table.

Reports under the mandatory MRSA bacteraemia surveillance system (acute national health service trusts, England)

	MRSA
April to March	
2001–02	7,249
2002–03	7,373
2003–04	7,684
April 2004-September 2004	3,519

Source:
Health Protection Agency.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she is taking to reduce the incidence of MRSA at Chase Farm hospital. [791]

Jane Kennedy: To support the target of halving meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) bloodstream infections by 2008, the Department has set up an improvement network for trusts with high MRSA numbers and challenging targets. Barnet and Chase Farm national health service trust, of which Chase Farm hospital is a part, is a member of this network, which is helping trusts improve their infection control. Trusts now have directors of infection prevention and control and they will publish annual reports on local progress shortly.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will exempt multiple sclerosis therapy centres from the need to undergo Healthcare Commission inspections; and if she will make a statement. [659]

Mr. Byrne: There are no plans to exempt these centres from the requirement to register with, and be inspected by, the Healthcare Commission.

NHS Staff (Assaults)

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she is taking to protect NHS staff from violent assaults; and if she will make a statement. [777]

Jane Kennedy: Violence against national health service staff is wholly unacceptable and will not be tolerated. For the first time the NHS is putting in place a network of local specialists across the NHS with the professional skills to tackle this problem, supported nationally by the NHS security management service. Full figures for 2004–05 will be available shortly, but the indications are that this approach has already delivered a substantial increase in the number of prosecutions.

Overseas Nurses

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many overseas nurses were trained in the *(a)* NHS and *(b)* private sector in the last year for which figures are available. [473]

Mr. Byrne: We do not hold this information centrally.

From data provided by the University and Colleges Admissions Service, the total number of applicants accepted on nursing diploma and degree programmes for 2004 entry is 21,171, of which 432 were from overseas countries.

Paediatric Oncology

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many paediatric oncology beds were available in England on 8 May; [507]

(2) how many vacancies there are for paediatric oncology nurses; and how many have been vacant for the last three months; [508]

(3) how many children have had to wait more than 10 days for a paediatric oncology bed in England during the last two years; [510]

(4) what the average occupancy rate for paediatric oncology beds in England was in the last period for which figures are available. [511]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not centrally collected on either the numbers and use of beds nor numbers of nurses at a sub-specialty level, such as paediatric oncology.

Waiting Time Targets

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list those primary care trusts responsible for patients in breach of the nine months in-patient waiting time target for the period ending on 31 March. [242]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows the number of patients waiting over nine months for an in-patient admission as at 31 March 2005, commissioner based.

Commissioning primary care trust (PCT) name	*Number of in-patients waiting over nine months*
Southern Norfolk	1
Richmond and Twickenham	1
Sutton and Merton	2
East Leeds	1
Wakefield West	1
Salford	1
Cheshire West	4
Halton	1
Warrington	1
Maidstone Weald	1
East Elmbridge	1
Brighton and Hove City	3
North Bristol	4
Bristol South and West	10
South Gloucester	2
North Somerset	2
Bath and NE Somerset	1
North Bristol	1
Bristol South and West	1
Shropshire County	2

Of the 41 patients waiting over 12 months at the end of March 2005, most were waiting for admission either to Welsh hospitals or a single English trust (the United Bristol hospitals national health service trust).

Written Answers to Questions

The following answers were received between Friday 27 May and Friday 3 June 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Servants

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the implementation of the Government's commitment to remove the disqualification of Irish nationals from senior Civil Service posts. [517]

Mr. Hutton: The Government are committed to removing the disqualification of Irish and other non UK-European economic area nationals from certain civil service posts a soon as a legislative opportunity allows.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Bribery

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the observations and recommendations in the OECD Phase 2 report on the United Kingdom's Application of the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions and the 1997 Recommendation on Combating Bribery in International Business Transactions. [1035]

Ian Pearson: On its publication in March, the Government welcomed the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) phase 2 report's recognition of the

> "highest level of transparency, professionalism and cooperation"

which the UK showed during the review process. The Attorney-General, many Government departments, law enforcement agencies, parliamentarians and others made a great effort to ensure that the OECD examiners had access to all those with an interest in our anti-bribery framework.

Bribery of any official or 'agent' are long standing crimes under UK law and since 2002 our courts have had jurisdiction over acts of bribery by UK nationals and companies even if the acts take place entirely overseas. Against this background the OECD Bribery Working Group concluded in 2003 that

> "UK law now addresses the requirements of the convention".

The latest report commends the UK for other aspects of our anti-bribery framework, such as employee whistleblower protection, the ability of the tax authorities to make spontaneous disclosures of suspicious information to law enforcement agencies and the wide scope of the "regulated sector" in our anti-money-laundering reporting regime.

The report also notes the support the Government have provided to a number of private sector and civil society anti-corruption initiatives, e.g. Transparency International's Business Principles on Countering Bribery, the International Business Leaders' Forum and the Commonwealth Business Council.

As is customary with these reports, it also presents recommendations for further action. These focus on areas such as awareness-raising and the prevention and detection of foreign bribery. We are considering how best to take these forward and will report on progress to the OECD Bribery Working Group in December.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the counter-narcotics programme in Afghanistan. [1028]

Dr. Howells: The UK, as lead nation, remains committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive National Drug Control Strategy. We are working with the Afghan Government and others to increase activity in all areas of their strategy over the coming year—the principles of which were underlined by President Karzai during the first Afghan Counter Narcotics National Conference held at the beginning of December shortly after his inauguration. President Karzai has continued to make very clear his determination to tackle the drugs problem. He reinforced this determination when he met my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary in February. We welcome the commitment shown by President Karzai and the Government of Afghanistan in tackling this problem.

As well as co-ordinating the activity of international partners, the UK is providing substantial financial and practical support—the UK will spend more than £50 million this year on counter narcotics work in Afghanistan, including £30 million on Alternative Livelihoods.

I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement made by my hon. Friend, the Member for Harlow (Bill Rammell), the former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, on 10 March 2005, *Official Report*, columns 121–23WS on Afghanistan: Counter Narcotics. The statement outlined increased UK support for the Government of Afghanistan's 8-pillar 2005 Counter Narcotics Implementation Plan (Institution Building, Information Campaign, Alternative Livelihoods, Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice, Eradication, Demand Reduction and Regional Co-operation). Our activity in the last financial year included: the running of seven training courses on intelligence and investigation techniques for the Afghan Counter-Narcotics Police; support for over five major seizures of opiates; the provision of a mobile forensic laboratory; and help to establish regional law enforcement offices in seven provincial centres outside Kabul.

In addition, the UK works closely with Afghanistan's neighbours, including providing assistance, to help their efforts to counter the flow of opiates from Afghanistan.

The UK is currently pressing for specific commitments from partners following a joint Foreign Secretary and International Development Secretary lobby letter campaign in February. We want to solicit funds for the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (CNTF), in support of the Afghans' Counter Narcotics Implementation Plan.

Belarus

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Belarus concerning the proceedings by the state authorities against the New Life Church in Minsk. [843]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 26 May 2005]:* The Government continue to raise human rights issues with the Belarusian authorities, both bilaterally and together with EU partners. Most recently, the EU issued a statement on 19 May condemning the use of administrative regulations to restrict the activities of independent organisations such as the New Life Church. The statement called on the Belarusian Government to reconsider legislation which threatens the existence of these organisations and denies the population the right to freedom of association. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not made any separate representations concerning the New Life Church. However, our ambassador in Minsk has met with the leaders of the Church to hear their concerns.

The full text of the EU statement is available on the internet at www.eu2005.lu

EU Constitution

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings have been held between departmental staff from the *(a)* EU Constitution team and *(b)* EU Presidency team within his Department and the organisation Britain in Europe. [1175]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office meet a wide number of outside organisations in the course of their work. The EU Constitution team held meetings with Britain in Europe in October 2004 and May 2005. The EU Presidency team also held one meeting with Britain in Europe in autumn 2004 to provide background information on the work of the UK Presidency of the EU.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what requests he has made to *(a)* the European Commission, *(b)* the European Parliament and *(c)* other EU institutions regarding its expenditure on public information before and during the referendum on the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe. [1215]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Institutions of the European Union are responsible for their own activities in terms of providing information to the public, though they have made clear that they will consult the Government about any public information activities in the UK. Ministers and officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are in contact with EU institutions in order to ensure clarity of and continuing respect for the role of the institutions in providing information about the EU.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by what mechanisms information from EU institutions on the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe will be assessed against the criteria of objectivity and accuracy *(a)* before and *(b)* during the referendum on UK ratification. [1216]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: EU institutions, not the Government, are responsible for the content of their publications.

North Cyprus

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will change the advice on the Foreign Office website to advise UK nationals against purchasing properties in occupied North Cyprus where the original owner of the land was a Greek Cypriot. [R] [1140]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government already advise potential purchasers of property in north Cyprus that the non-recognition of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" and the possibility of a future political settlement in Cyprus could have significant practical, financial and legal consequences. We strongly encourage potential buyers to seek independent, qualified legal advice and we also highlight the risk that purchasers could face legal proceedings in the courts of the Republic of Cyprus.

The travel advice is regularly reviewed and amended in response to changing circumstances on the island. However, it is not the place of the Government to intervene in private commercial transactions.

Nuclear Power Conference

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who represented the UK at the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power for the 21st Century, in Paris on 21 and 22 March; and if he will make a statement. [1239]

Dr. Howells: This conference is one of a number organised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to discuss nuclear issues. We did not attend on this occasion, although the UK is regularly represented at IAEA conferences. For example, we recently hosted the IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security in March 2005.

Public Relations

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the events that have been organised by the public relations company Geronimo as part of its contract with his Department; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the company in generating media coverage. [1176]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Geronimo PR assisted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the planning and promotion of five ministerial visits to different UK regions. Evaluation of their work will take place in due course.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list events that the public relations company Trimedia Communications has organised as part of its contract with his Department; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the company in generating media coverage. [1177]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has recruited Trimedia Communications UK to provide media relations support during our EU Presidency to ensure an appropriate range of media are informed about the Presidency. No events have been planned and the results of Trimedia's work will not be available until the end of the Presidency. At that point Trimedia are required to provide an evaluation report.

In April 2005, the FCO also recruited Trimedia to provide media and public relations support for the FCO's consular awareness/travel safety campaign "Know Before You Go". Recently, Trimedia brokered an agreement with BritishLions.com (the official website of Lions' fans) for the communication of online consular and travel safety messages to rugby fans visiting New Zealand for the British and Irish Lions' Tour. This is the first public facing initiative undertaken by Trimedia on our behalf and is on-going. It would be premature to comment on the company's effectiveness in generating media coverage at this stage. Trimedia are however required to demonstrate their effectiveness against targets laid down by the FCO and the Central Office of Information, through whom this contract was tendered.

Russia

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will ensure that human rights and democracy issues are a central focus of EU-Russian relations when the UK assumes the EU presidency; and if he will make a statement. [1033]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As agreed in the EU-Russia Four Common Spaces on 10 May, democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including a free and independent media, and the effective application of common values by independent judicial systems are all key elements of the EU-Russia relationship. The UK will ensure that these issues remain central to the development of EU-Russian relations as it takes forward implementation of the Four Common Spaces during its presidency of the EU.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made to the Russian Government on international fair trial standards in the trial of Mikhail Khodorkovsky; and if he will make a statement. [1034]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have been following the trial closely. Our embassy staff have attended court hearings and the Russian authorities are aware of our concerns. We believe that Russia's people, and Russia's future, are best served by a judicial system properly independent of Government or other outside interference; a system which administers justice consistently, transparently and objectively.

We welcome President Putin's words in his address on 25 April on the importance of an effective judicial system and, together with our EU partners, continue to make clear to the Russian Government our concern that the rule of law should be applied in a non-discriminatory and proportional way. We raised our concerns about the Russian judicial system as recently as 23 May during our regular bilateral human rights dialogue which was held in Moscow.

Saharawi Human Rights Activists

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with Saharawi human rights activists concerning protection of their rights within MINURSO. [1284]

Dr. Howells: Human rights issues are outside the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). UK officials meet Saharawi human rights groups when they visit the Western Sahara and will continue to do so.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Sudan, regarding the forced relocations of internally displaced persons in the Sorba Arabi Camp, Khartoum. [1061]

Ian Pearson: On 19 May, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development issued a statement expressing the UK's grave concern about the deaths of three civilians and 14 police officers in Soba Aradi Internally Displaced People's (IDP) camp in Khartoum, (available at: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/news/files/pressreleases/bennsoba-sudan.asp).

My right hon. Friend called on all sides to prevent any further loss of life and urged the Government of Sudan to respect the human rights of the IDPs, protect its citizens and bring those responsible to justice. Our ambassador in Khartoum has also raised the incident with the Government of Sudan and pressed them to investigate the incident in consultation with the Joint National Transition Team under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and to take the necessary steps to prevent a recurrence.

We have repeatedly made clear to the Government of Sudan that all returns and relocations must be entirely voluntary and take place in full consultation with the established international monitoring mechanisms which are in place.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with representatives of civil society from Southern Sudan concerning the peace process in the country. [1062]

Ian Pearson: A member of the British High Commission in Nairobi now spends much of his time in Southern Sudan. He and other UK government officials discuss the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace

Agreement with members of civil society, and others in Southern Sudan. We have also provided £1.2 million to Pact, a non-government organisation supporting the emergence of an active civil society in South Sudan.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Government of Sudan, and *(b)* the Sudan People's Liberation Army and Sudan People's Liberation Movement on ending all support for the Lord's Resistance Army in Southern Sudan and Northern Uganda. [1063]

Ian Pearson: We regularly raise the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) with both the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). Since 2001, the Government of Sudan has been co-operating with the Government of Uganda on this issue and has allowed Ugandan armed forces into its territory in pursuit of LRA fighters. Following representations by the UK Government to both the Government of Sudan and the SPLM, this agreement was renewed on 15 May. Both sides have reiterated their commitment, under the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed on 9 January, to work together to disarm, repatriate or expel foreign insurgency groups, including the LRA.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations on behalf of the Uzbek Baptist Minister Farkhod Khamedov. [845]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 26 May 2005]*: We are disturbed by reports of religious intolerance and persecution in Uzbekistan. Discrimination, harassment and criminal prosecutions of Muslims, as well as harassment of religious minorities, including Protestant Christians such as Mr. Khamedov, remain commonplace.

We regularly raise these issues with the Uzbek authorities. In March 2005 our ambassador to Tashkent discussed Uzbekistan's record on religious freedom with Deputy Foreign Minister Nematov. As we have made clear to the Uzbek authorities, we believe that constraints on religious freedoms contribute significantly to the radicalisation of Islamic opinion.

Western Sahara

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the compliance of decisions to review reconnaissance contracts for oil and gas in the Western Sahara with the UN embargo on oil and gas activity in that country. [1286]

Dr. Howells: The Government regard the sovereignty of Western Sahara as undetermined pending United Nations efforts to find a solution to the dispute over the territory. UN Legal Counsel gave an opinion on the signing of contracts for exploration of mineral resources in Western Sahara in 2002 (S/2002/161 of 12 February 2002). This concluded that, while the contracts in question

> "are not in themselves illegal, if further exploration and exploitation activities were to proceed in disregard of the interests and wishes of the people of Western Sahara, they will be in violation of the international law principles applicable to mineral resource activities in Non-Self-Governing Territories."

We fully support this advice.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum and Immigration

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the process by which those who fail to be granted refugee status have their status in the UK determined thereafter. [663]

Mr. McNulty: When an asylum claimant is found by the Immigration and Nationality not to be a refugee within the meaning of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees, caseworkers will go on to consider whether a grant of Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave is appropriate under our published policies. Where a claimant qualifies for Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, limited leave will be granted for a period of up to three years. Those who are found not to be in need of international protection and have no other basis of stay would be expected to leave the United Kingdom, subject to the outcome of any appeal. If a claim is certified as clearly unfounded, then any appeal could only be brought from abroad; otherwise the claimant would be entitled to remain in the United Kingdom until their appeal has been determined.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether applicants for refugee status whose status is determined at the proposed accommodation centre for asylum seekers at Bicester and whose application fails will be *(a)* detained at Campsfield detention centre and *(b)* free to make their own arrangements for their removal from the UK. [670]

Mr McNulty: All applicants are provided with information during the process to enable them to make a voluntary return to their country of origin if their application is unsuccessful, and will be encouraged to do so. Applicants whose claims fail and do not intend to return voluntarily may be removed directly from the centre. Those for whom detention is deemed necessary will be moved to whichever removal centre is considered to be most suitable.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of migrants who apply for refugee status and for which it is determined that they do not qualify have appealed in the last 12 months; and what the average length of time for determining such appeals over that period was. [698]

Mr. McNulty: The latest published statistics estimate that 63 per cent. of asylum applications received in 2003 resulted in an appeal being lodged to the Immigration Appellate Authority (now Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT)).

The Home Office and the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) set a jointly owned public service agreement target for 2003–04 that 60 per cent. of substantive asylum applications (excluding withdrawals and third country cases[1]) received from 1 April 2003 should have a decision, up to and including final appeal at the Immigration Appeal Tribunal, within six months[2].

The Home Office and DCA exceeded this target with 64 per cent. of substantive applications received in the period April 2003 to March 2004 had a final decision, up to and including appeals at the IAT, within six months.

[1] Cases which may be the responsibility of other EU member states under the Dublin Convention.

[2] "Six months" is defined as 182 days.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the enabling regulations to bring into force section 9 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 will be laid; and if he will make a statement. [790]

Mr. McNulty: No enabling regulations are required. Section 9 came into effect on 1 December 2004.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy that interviews of asylum claimants are always tape recorded. [1530]

Mr. McNulty: The Court of Appeal judgment in the case of Dirshe, handed down on 20 April, requires the Home Office to allow the tape recording of substantive asylum interviews where the claimant is not accompanied at interview by a representative or interpreter acting on their behalf. As a result, we will record substantive asylum interviews upon request except where asylum claimants have public funding for a representative or interpreter to attend the interview or have the resources to fund a representative or interpreter to attend the interview themselves. We will not record substantive asylum interviews where asylum claimants have the right to a publicly funded representative or interpreter at interview but choose not to exercise that right.

We do not propose at present to extend this policy to those who fall outside the scope of the Court of Appeal judgment.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to restrict the right of appeal against refusal of visitors' visas. [382]

Mr. McNulty: The Five Year Strategy "Controlling our borders: Making migration work for Britain" which was published in February, sets out the Government's plans for changing the right of appeal against the refusal of family visit visas. We will make changes to hear family visit visa appeals on paper only. In line with the Strategy, amendments will be made so that the right of appeal for family visitors only exists where the relevant family member is a close relative who is settled in the UK.

Additional measures will be considered to ensure that appeal provisions remain fair and prevent abuse. Since 1993 visitors, other than family visitors, have had no right of appeal under the immigration rules against a refusal of entry clearance.

Deportation

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used for deportation of individuals following imprisonment; and what criteria apply to those holding dual nationalities. [954]

Mr. McNulty: Any foreign national convicted of a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment, with the exception of certain Commonwealth and Irish nationals who were ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom on one January 1973 and who have been resident here for the last five years, is liable to deportation.

The Secretary of State may make a deportation order against a prisoner either following the court's recommendation as a part of the sentence under section 3(6) of the Immigration Act 1971, or on the grounds that his/her presence in the United Kingdom is not conducive to the public good under section 3(5) of the same Act. Each case is considered against the criteria laid down by paragraph 364 of the Immigration Rules HC 395.

Any person holding dual British nationality has the right of abode in the United Kingdom and is not liable to deportation. The fact that a person holds dual nationality of two other countries is not a direct factor when deciding whether or not to make a deportation order against them, but their views together with available travel documentation are taken into account when deciding to which country they are to be removed.

Identity Cards

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the likely impact of identity cards on the operation of human rights legislation. [1054]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 27 May 2005]:* The Identity Cards Bill is compatible with the United Kingdom's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. The Home Secretary signed a declaration to that effect on 19 May 2005.

The previous Bill was subject to scrutiny by the Joint Committee on Human Rights. The Home Secretary published his response to the interim report on 8 February 2005.

Mark Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the bodies that will be entitled to access files of individuals stored on the identity card database. [1180]

Mr. McNulty: No bodies will be entitled to access files of individuals stored on the National Identity Register (NIR) other than those responsible for the administration of the scheme and the National Identity Scheme Commissioner in support of his functions.

The ID cards scheme verification service will confirm and in some cases provide information held on the Register to accredited organisations but only with the consent of the card holder, as set out in Clause 14 of the Bill.

Clauses 15–17 of the Identity Cards Bill provide for Parliament to agree powers for specified public services to require identity checks. Parliament will have to agree the rules for identity checks on a service by service basis.

Clause 19–23 of the Bill also allow for information held on the register to be provided without the card holders consent to the Director-General of the Security Service, the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, the Director of the Government Communications Headquarters, a Chief Officer of Police and Commissioners for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Parliament can also agree via regulations for information to be provided without consent to a prescribed government department, to a prescribed Northern Ireland government department, a designated documents authority and other public authorities. This is subject to regulations set out in Clause 23.

In all of these cases the Bill allows for information to be provided to specified organisations by the Secretary of State. This is not the same as giving these organisations access to the Register.

Mark Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the existing *(a)* biometric databases and *(b)* non-biometric databases on which he will model his identity card database. [1203]

Mr. McNulty: At present the requirements for the National Identity Register (NIR) are being established. The NIR may share features with solutions used for passport and driving licence but there are no databases, biometric or non-biometric, which can be taken as a direct model in which to base the NIR.

Migrant Workers (EU Accession States)

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of the impact of workers from EU accession states on labour market stability; if he will publish the results of that assessment; and if he will make a statement; [535]

(2) what assessment he has made of the numbers of workers from countries which became member states on 1 May 2004 who have registered in the UK; and in which *(a)* sectors and *(b)* types of employment these workers are engaged. [536]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 25 May 2005]:* An early assessment of the impact of the free movement of workers from central and Eastern Europe on the UK labour market was published on 26 May 2005 on the Department for Work and Pensions website www.dwp.gov.uk.

The Accession Monitoring report, published on the Home Office website on 26 May 2005 contains management information showing the number of workers registered under the Worker Registration Scheme between 1 May 2004 to 31 March 2005, the sectors in which they are working and the occupations. The report is available at http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/0/reports/accession_monitoring.html

Sexual Offences Act

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to assess the effectiveness of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. [570]

Paul Goggins: The Sexual Offences Act 2003 only came into force in May 2004 and it is too soon to make formal assessments of its effectiveness. The Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Sexual Offending (IDMGSO) has agreed that a full review of the impact of the legislation will be commenced in May 2006 when the necessary data will be available to assess its effectiveness.

DEFENCE

Detainees (Treatment)

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to paragraph 80 of the Intelligence and Security Committee's Report, "The Handling of Detainees by UK intelligence personnel in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay and Iraq", (Cm. 6469), on what dates before 28 June 2004 members of the armed forces *(a)* escorted civilian intelligence personnel to US-controlled detention facilities in Iraq, *(b)* handed such personnel over to US armed forces or other US personnel and *(c)* handed such personnel over to civilian contractors. [529]

Mr. Ingram: The information is not held centrally and could be collated only at disproportionate cost.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether *(a)* detainees, *(b)* security internees and *(c)* enemy prisoners of war transferred by British forces to the United States military have been subject to any form of sensory deprivation. [236]

Mr. Ingram: The UK Government take their responsibilities to safeguard individuals taken into custody by UK forces very seriously. This includes those who were subsequently transferred to US custody in Iraq. In March 2003, the UK and US Governments agreed a Memorandum of Understanding which contains mutual assurances on the treatment of all transferred persons in Iraq and confirms that such persons are entitled to the full protection of the Geneva Conventions. Within the terms of that MOU however, specific procedures for handling internees are a matter for the US authorities. These procedures may include measures amounting to sensory deprivation.

The UK considers that the use of certain sensory deprivation techniques, for example blindfolds, is lawful for certain aspects of prisoner handling. For example, it may be necessary to blindfold a prisoner being moved from one location to another for reasons of force protection and security. It is however unlawful to use any sensory deprivation techniques during interrogations.

Iraq

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Army personnel are listed among the hostile military deaths in Iraq; and how many died following incidents involving *(a)* Land Rovers, *(b)* other light or non-armoured vehicles and *(c)* no vehicles. [383]

Mr. Ingram: A total of 87 United Kingdom military personnel have died on Operation TELIC (of whom 65 were Army personnel), 49 of whom were killed in action (40 Army), 12 of the remaining 38 died in vehicle related accidents (all of whom were Army personnel).

MARS Programme

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the support vessels that form part of the MARS programme will *(a)* be regarded as warships and *(b)* be built in the UK. [832]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 May 2005]:* It is Government policy that the fabrication and assembly of new Royal Navy warship hulls should be undertaken in the United Kingdom. Though current Royal Fleet auxiliary ships are not warships they are classed as "warlike" and options for replacing these ships are being examined. The Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) project is at an early state and no decision has been taken as to what will be procured; however, we expect that MARS ships will probably be "warlike".

NATO Alliance

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures his Department takes to promote the further understanding of the NATO Alliance among *(a)* the general public, *(b)* school age students and *(c)* university students. [1066]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence promotes understanding of NATO and our role in the alliance through promotional publications on defence, the Defence Tourer Exhibition (which travels the UK in the summer months), the Defence Schools Team, and the MOD website.

Since 1994, the MOD has contributed funding to the Atlantic Council of the UK (a charitable organisation and the UK's affiliate to the Atlantic Treaty Association) which aims to promote understanding in the UK of the role of NATO, largely through educational channels.

Unmanned Air Vehicle Projects

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which UK-based aerospace companies are undertaking unmanned air vehicle projects funded in whole or in part by his Department. [1173]

Mr. Ingram: At present, both Thales UK and BAE Systems are leading work on unmanned air vehicle projects funded by the Ministry of Defence.

Monday 6 June 2005

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Asian Tsunami

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his estimate is of total Government funds that will have been disbursed following the South East Asian tsunami; and what estimate his Department has made of what proportion of those funds will be paid to UK public sector bodies. [915]

Hilary Benn: The Government have programmed some £67 million of their commitment of £75 million for the relief and recovery effort. I expect the full sum to be disbursed. The Government have also committed up to £65 million as the United Kingdom's contribution towards reconstruction and in addition, the Government will be contributing an estimated £50 million to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal, through the tax relief on public donations made through the Gift Aid scheme and making a special donation to offset the Value Added Tax on goods sold to raise money for the tsunami-affected areas. Debt relief for affected countries is presently being discussed and will provide additional resources for partner Government's to respond to public need.

DFID's support to the relief and recovery effort is mainly channelled through the United Nations, the Red Cross movement and in support of non-governmental organisations. Some direct action has also been undertaken including support from United Kingdom military assets. The marginal cost of the support provided by the Ministry of Defence is currently estimated at £2.75 million.

Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many consultants were employed by his Department in each of the last three years; and what their names were. [1331]

Mr. Thomas: DFID awarded the following numbers of contracts from its headquarters office in each of the last three years:

	Number of contracts	*Number of contractors*
2002–03	833	404
2003–04	768	350
2004–05	667	309

Details of these contracts are published on the DFID website www.dfid.gov.uk This does not include lower-value contracts issued by DFID's overseas offices, of which there is no consolidated central record. It would incur a disproportionate cost to produce a list of all those individual contracts.

Indonesia

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assurances he has received from the Indonesian Government that debt relief will not be used to support arms sales to the UK; and if he will make a statement. [1396]

Mr. Thomas: As a result of the tsunami disaster which hit the Indian Ocean region on the 26 December 2004, the Paris Club creditors agreed to offer Indonesia and other eligible sovereign countries a debt service payment moratorium for one year. The Indonesian Government have agreed that the savings from this will be used directly to benefit the populations affected by the tsunami.

Together with a number of other donors, DFID has also committed £4.7 million over two phases to an Indonesian-led organisation dedicated to promoting good governance called the Governance Partnership. This provides support to tackling corruption including supporting new state-sponsored anti-corruption organisations, and enhancing development of a modern, pluralistic democracy.

Sudan

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how he expects the £300 million of British aid to southern Sudan to be spent. [1478]

Hilary Benn: DFID has provisionally allocated £282.7 million across the whole of Sudan over the next three financial years. This money is not earmarked between north and south Sudan. We have, however, pledged £23.5 million over three years to the World Bank's multi donor trust fund for South Sudan (we are making an equal commitment to the same Fund for the North). We have also allocated some £2.6 million for UNICEF's interim Capacity Building Trust Fund for the South.

While exact allocation of the remaining funds will be decided over the coming months and years, our support is likely to focus on humanitarian relief; delivery of basic social services (including working closely with other donors in South Sudan to ensure that the Government of South Sudan has the capacity effectively to deliver services to all their citizens, including returned refugees and internally displaced people); rule of law; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of soldiers; and enhancing the accountability of the Security Sector.

As part of our efforts to harmonise donor assistance we are committed to developing a joint programme and office in the south with the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and any other interested donors. We hope this programme will be in place by the end of this calendar year.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action his Department has taken to ensure that humanitarian access in Darfur is improved in preparation for the rainy season. [863]

Hilary Benn: DFID is working through the UN to ensure humanitarian access is improved in advance of the rainy season. This year DFID has made a £45 million contribution to humanitarian parts of the UN 2005 Workplan for Sudan to meet needs across the country. Of the £45 million, around £1 million went to the World Food Programme's (WFP) logistics for their emergency food aid operation in Darfur, and a further

£1 million went towards funding the operation of the UN Humanitarian Air Service. The remainder went to support a range of UN agencies and NGOs including £10 million for health care projects, £8.9 million towards food aid, £5.5 million for water and sanitation projects, £4.8 million to help improve people's livelihoods, and £4.7 million to protect vulnerable people affected by the crisis.

The WFP are pre-positioning food stocks across Darfur to help guarantee distributions during the rainy season. So far they have some 28,000 mega tonnes in West Darfur—equivalent to around two months' requirements for that state.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent estimate he has made of the number of civilians without access to humanitarian assistance in Darfur. [864]

Hilary Benn: The latest UN Darfur Humanitarian Needs Profile estimates that as of 1 April, a total of 2.62 million people in Darfur were in need of humanitarian assistance, of which 1.96 million were internally displaced. In April the World Food Programme targeted 2.1 million beneficiaries, and reached 1.6 million leaving a shortfall of 500,000 not receiving food aid, largely due to insecurity such as banditry. People that are not provided for will, where feasible, resort to eating wild foods, sell their possessions to purchase food, or move on to other locations. Of all those in need of assistance, 480,000 had no provided shelter, 1.1 million did not have clean water and 870,000 did not have access to primary health care.

Uzbekistan

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid his Department gave to Uzbekistan between 2001 and 2005. [309]

Mr. Thomas: My Department provided a total of £2,544,000 of bilateral aid to Uzbekistan from 2001 to March 2005. The annual breakdown was as follows:

	£
2001–02[1]	397,000
2002–03	491,000
2003–04	599,000
2004–05	613,000

[1] Financial year March 2001–02

The allocation for 2005–06 is £750,000.

From 2001 to 2004, the focus of this assistance was on primary health care and strengthening civil society. Our current programme focuses on working with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and local government to improve economic growth and reduce poverty for the population of the Zarafshan valley in cross-border work with Tajikistan. We are also working with the World bank and other partners on a regional programme to tackle the emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic. In light of the recent violence in eastern Uzbekistan we have suspended our work with central Government on national poverty statistics.

The UK's share of multilateral aid to Uzbekistan was £1.4 million for the calendar year 2001–02 and £1.7 million for 2002–03. This was primarily through the European Commission and the United Nations. Information is not yet available concerning individual country shares of multilateral aid to Uzbekistan for 2003–05.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bees

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what evidence she has collated on the incidence of European foulbrood disease in bees; [1289]

(2) what decisions she has made on the assessment of European foulbrood disease, with particular reference to its incidence over the last five years. [1290]

Jim Knight: The number of confirmed cases of European foulbrood is collated annually by the national bees unit of the Central Science Laboratory and is published on their website. These figures indicate that incidence in England has declined over the past five years from 1,007 cases in 2000 to 672 in 2004.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many meetings she has had with the British Beekeepers' Association since May 2004. [1291]

Jim Knight: The Department has had five meetings with the British Beekeepers' Association since May 2004, including one with the then Minister, Lord Whitty, last November.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will make a statement on plans to deregulate European foulbrood disease; and on what evidence those plans are based; [1292]

(2) what plans she has to remove European foulbrood disease from the list of notifiable diseases. [1293]

Jim Knight: European Foulbrood (EFB) is a disease of honeybees for which effective means of control are in place or under development. We are therefore working towards removing EFB from our list of notifiable bee diseases by 2008, subject to making satisfactory progress with trials of the 'shook swarm' technique which the National Bees Unit is currently evaluating.

Once we have further results from these trials—probably towards the end of 2006—we will revisit the issue, taking account of all current threats to bee health and will consult further with beekeeping associations before reaching final decisions on any changes to the control arrangements.

British Waterways Board

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will change the policy of the British Waterways Board regarding achieving a return from surplus non-operational land. [1152]

Jim Knight: The Government recently carried out a five yearly review of British Waterways and endorsed its vision of being largely self-sufficient by 2012. British Waterways' non-operational estate is an essential part of this strategy and produced around £26.5 million of rental income in 2004–05, out-performing the Industry Investment Property Database for total returns from property and investment by almost 3 percentage points.

British Waterways relies on income from its assets to contribute to the cost of maintaining its waterways and to improve their attractiveness, use, amenity and interest to the wider public. Without this income, British Waterways would be more dependent on Government funding. There are no plans to change this policy.

Climate Change

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is the Government's policy that the post-Kyoto strategy to tackle climate change should be target-based on a country basis. [1493]

Mr. Morley: As yet, there have been no formal intergovernmental discussions of the design of a future commitment period under the Kyoto protocol. The UK will chair the EU at the UN climate change conference at the end of this year at which these discussions are due to commence. Our presidency of the EU gives us an excellent opportunity to galvanise work on preparing for future action. Nevertheless, experts have been considering what different approaches might look like and a number of approaches have been suggested for the design of future action on climate change.

At this stage, it is important that we remain flexible in looking at the options, that all existing suggestions for future frameworks remain on the table, and that full consideration is given both to the possible frameworks themselves and to the elements within them that could be used to form part of a workable solution.

In considering any future regime, the Government's long-term view is that the architecture of a future framework needs to be realistic (relevant to countries with different national circumstances), robust (capable of being adjusted in the light of experience) and durable (will not become irrelevant after a few years) but for any such framework to be effective, it would be necessary for it to achieve a wide global acceptance and to deliver results in terms of significant emissions reductions. The Government are committed to finding a solution to the issue of climate change that meet these criteria.

Common Agricultural Policy

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* net contribution by the UK to and *(b)* net income received by the UK from the common agricultural policy has been in each year since 1980. [1526]

Jim Knight: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The UK contributes to the whole EU budget rather than to specific components.

Net contributions to EC budget

	£ million
1998–99 outturn	4,111
1999–2000 outturn	3,325
2000–01 outturn	4,318
2001–02 outturn	1,477
2002–03 outturn	3,080
2003–04 estimated outturn	3,295
2004–05 plans	3,306

Source:
HM Treasury "European Community Finances Statement on the 2004 EC Budget and measures to counter fraud and financial mismanagement".

(b) The following table lists receipts from the EU in relation to the common agricultural policy. Receipts do not always relate to expenditure in the year in which they are received.

	£ million
1979–80	412
1980–81	606
1981–82	742
1982–83	805
1983–84	1,200
1984–85	1,203
1985–86	1,282
1986–87	1,481
1987–88	1,128
1988–89	1,597
1989–90	1,226
1990–91	1,645
1991–92	1,812
1992–93	1,593
1993–94	2,885
1994–95	2,478
1995–96	2,674
1996–97	3,304
1997–98	3,466
1998–99	3,343
1999–2000	2,563
2000–01	2,682

Source:
"Annual Review of Agriculture" 1979–1988, "Agriculture in the UK" 1988–2001.

Receipts from the EAGGF Guarantee and Guidance Fund

	£ million
2001	2,507
2002	2,481
2003	2,665
2004 (Forecast)	2,907

Source:
HM Treasury "European Community Finances Statement on the 2004 EC Budget and measures to counter fraud and financial mismanagement".

Dangerous Wild Animals Act

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the timetable is for the review of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, with particular reference to the review of species listed in the Schedule to the Act. [1361]

Jim Knight: I intend to proceed with revision of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act by a two-stage process, addressing first the Schedule, which lists the species which are required to be licensed, then the main body of the Act.

Following public consultation carried out on the Schedule last year, my aim is to revise it during 2005 before the next round of licensing at the end of the year. On the main body of the Act, the Department is developing new options which aim to deliver the public safety benefits of the legislation but also to reduce the level of regulatory burden on local authorities and animal keepers. This will require a slightly longer timescale which may be affected by other initiatives such as the Animal Welfare Bill. I expect to consider the options this year with a view to further developing new proposals for consultation early in 2006.

Departmental Assets

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to realise the value of under-performing assets held by *(a)* her Department and *(b)* its associated public bodies. [1090]

Jim Knight: In response to Sir Michael Lyons's Report 'Towards Better Management of Public Sector Assets' published in December 2004, Defra is developing a comprehensive Asset Management Strategy covering both the core Department and its associated public bodies (i.e. its Executive Agencies, NDPBs, and Public Corporations). A key aim of the strategy will be to rationalise and improve the use of assets, and to dispose of those assets that are under-utilised or under-performing. It will be closely integrated into our overall efficiency programme which itself will present important opportunities for asset rationalisation and disposal. The strategy will also consider opportunities to exploit the value of Defra's intangible assets particularly intellectual property.

As part of our strategy, plans are already in place to dispose in 2005–06 of *(a)* approximately £5 million worth of land and buildings owned by the core Department, and *(b)* a further £14 million of property assets owned by Defra Executive Agencies and NDPBs. There will be further significant disposals of land and buildings in the coming years, but firm details and values have yet to be agreed.

Employment Agencies

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff from employment agencies were employed by *(a)* her Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department (i) at the end of April and (ii) in each six month period since April 2002. [953]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 25 May 2005]:* The information requested on Defra's agencies is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The information requested for Core Defra is being collected and I will make the information available to my hon. Friend by 9 June 2005.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidencies of the EU the (i) Committee on certificates of specific character for agricultural products and foodstuffs, (ii) Committee on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs, (iii) Management Committees of the common organisation of agricultural markets for cereals and (iv) Management Committees of the common organisation of agricultural markets for dehydrated fodder met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [552]

Jim Knight: The information is as follows:

(i) The Regulatory Committee on Certificates of Specific Character met three times in the period: on 20 January 2004; 24 February 2004; and 22 November 2004. All meetings took place in Brussels. Two UK officials with policy responsibility for regional foods attended each meeting.

(ii) The Standing Committee on Organic Farming and its associated working groups met in Brussels:

during the Italian presidency on 2–4 July, 22 September, 8–10 October, and 24–26 November;

during the Irish presidency on 5 February and 1 April;

during the Netherlands presidency on 6–7 July, 23–24 September, 5–6 October, 24 November and 9 December.

Meetings were attended by officials from Defra's Organic Farming Branch. A wide variety of issues were discussed, in particular, seeds for use in organic farming, additives permitted in organic food, imports to the EU from third countries, the use of conventional ingredients in feed for organic livestock, conversion of livestock for organic production and the proposed EU Organic Action Plan.

(iii) The Cereals Management Committee normally meets on a weekly basis in Brussels. The dates of meetings held during the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies and the items discussed can be viewed at the following internet address: http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/minco/manco/cereals/index.htm#top

Meetings are attended by officials from Defra and additionally, as necessary, by officials from the Rural Payments Agency and other UK Agriculture Departments.

(iv) The Dried Fodder Management Committee last met on 17 June 2004 in Brussels and was attended by officials from Defra. A summary of the items discussed can be viewed at the following internet address: http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/minco/manco/feed/index.htm

Single Payment Scheme

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received about the effects and desirability of ear tags on cattle and cattle passports following reforms to the single farm payment arrangements. [672]

Jim Knight: The legal requirements of cattle keepers regarding the identification and registration of bovine animals, which includes ear tags and cattle passports, remain unchanged under the Single Payment Scheme (SPS).

Under the SPS farmers will receive payments in respect of the area of land they seek to establish and activate entitlements provided they observe the rules of Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition and Cross Compliance.

In respect of Cross Compliance farmers must observe Statutory Management Requirements (SMR). SMR seven and eight relate to the existing legislation for the identification and registration of cattle.

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of farmers who will receive *(a)* more and *(b)* less funding through the redistribution of the dairy premium to be made under the Single Farm Payment Scheme; and if she will make a statement. [679]

Jim Knight: A detailed analysis of how English dairy farmers stand to benefit or lose out relative to historic entitlements is provided in the document; CAP Single Payment Scheme, Basis for Allocation of Entitlement, Impact of the Scheme to be Adopted in England, which is available on the Defra website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/capreform/background/pdf/webnoterev16.pdf

Data on the numbers of farmers who receive higher or lower subsidy payments will not be known until all of the claims for Single Payment have been scrutinised by the Rural Payments Agency. Only then will we know what areas of land and what entitlements have been claimed.

By the end of the transitional period some sectors will have gained or lost against historical subsidy receipts. Generally speaking, flat rate payments redistribute subsidy from more intensive to less intensive producers and to land not formerly in receipt of subsidy. On average larger dairy farms will receive lower payments under this system than under one based on historic receipts (although, by contrast, smaller farms will on average be better off). However, we believe that the eight-year transition to the flat rate payment should give farmers time to adjust.

All payments to dairy farmers in the UK, as for other recipients of the Single Payment, will be decoupled from production, and therefore are no longer linked to particular farming activity. In a decoupled subsidy environment, farmers should only produce milk if they can do so profitably.

Farming

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many active farmers there have been in each year from 1980 to date. [1527]

Jim Knight: The following figures show the number of farmers, partners, directors and spouses (if working on the holding) on holdings in England between 1980 and 2004. Until 1986 the figures account for all holdings. From 1987 they relate to economically active holdings defined as having a standard gross margin of greater than zero.

	Farmers, partners, directors and spouses
1980	246,642
1981	244,366
1982	242,158
1983	240,523
1984	241,554
1985	241,141
1986	241,567
1987	212,547
1988	211,109
1989	209,965
1990	204,571
1991	201,953
1992	202,780
1993	204,501
1994	203,025
1995	196,212
1996	195,388
1997	194,097
1998	195,388
1999	190,429
2000	211,394
2001	220,150
2002	223,862
2003	216,995
2004	221,810

Notes

(a) Figures for 1987 to 1999 cover main holdings only. For other years minor holdings are included. A holding is defined as minor if it meets all of the following conditions:

1. the total area is less than 6 hectares
2. the labour requirement is estimated to be less than 100 standard person-days
3. there is no regular full-time farmer or worker
4. the glasshouse area is less than 100 square meters
5. the occupier does not farm another holding.

(b) Due to the introduction of new questions in 1998 figures prior to this year are not directly comparable with later years' results.

(c) Due to a register improvement exercise in 2001 labour figures prior to this are not directly comparable with later results.

(d) The standard gross margin (SGM) is a financial measure based on the concept of the gross margin for farming enterprises. The total SGM for each farm is calculated by multiplying it's crop areas and livestock numbers by the appropriate SGM coefficients and then summing the result for all enterprises on the farm.

Source:

June Agricultural Census and Survey

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been given in total by the Government, excluding funding from EU sources, in direct aid to the farming industry in each year since 1980. [1525]

Jim Knight: The total direct payments paid to the UK farming industry are in the following list. Most expenditure under the CAP and some expenditure on other schemes is made by the UK Government and subsequently reimbursed by the EU. Figures excluding EU funding are not readily available.

Direct payments to the UK farming industry[1]

	£ million
1980	390
1981	331
1982	435
1983	658
1984	614
1985	590
1986	496
1987	424
1988	459

Direct payments to the UK farming industry[1]

	£ million
1989	485
1990	563
1991	785
1992	927
1993	1,998
1994	2,010
1995	2,351
1996	2,987
1997	2,810
1998	2,611
1999	2,609
2000	2,409
2001	3,546
2002	2,644
2003	2,731
2004	2,852

[1] Includes compensation for foot and mouth disease and other capital payments.

Source:

AUK 2004, Table 10.1 and 10.3.

Forestry Commission Wales

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs by what procedures the new director of the Forestry Commission Wales will be appointed. [1168]

Jim Knight: The Forestry Commission will follow the Senior Civil Service Recruitment Code procedures with regard to the appointment of a Director in Wales. Forestry is a devolved matter and I understand that the Forestry Commission will be working with the Welsh Assembly Government in managing the recruitment exercise.

Genetically Modified Maize

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government had had sight of the EU study into the effects of rats being fed Monsanto's MON 863 maize when it voted in favour of the application to import MON 863 at meetings of the Regulatory Committee on 29 November 2004 and 19 May 2005; and whether she has made a subsequent assessment of MON 863 in the light of this study. [1506]

Mr. Morley: I confirm that before voting on the dates mentioned the Government had seen both the rat feeding study submitted by Monsanto to support its applications under EU regulations and the critique of the study submitted by the German authorities

The votes taken on 29 November 2004 and 19 May 2005 relate to two separate applications on GM maize MON 863. The first related to the import of maize grain for use as any other maize (including feed but excluding cultivation) and the second to food products. Both dossiers will now go to the Council of Ministers for decisions as no qualified majority was reached at the respective committees.

The vote on 29 November related to the application by Monsanto via the German authorities under Directive 2001/18/EC for the import and use of GM maize grain, including feed but excluding food and cultivation. Monsanto's dossier included data from a rat feeding study. The German authorities submitted the dossier to other member states with a favourable opinion. In the UK the application was considered by the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment and the Advisory Committee on Animal Feed and based on their advice the UK gave a favourable opinion on this application.

The vote on 19 May was on an application made to the German authorities in August 2002 under the novel food regulations (EC) 258/97. This application is for food use of ingredients derived from GM maize MON 863. This dossier also included the results of the rat feeding study. The initial opinion from the German authorities was referred to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which concluded that MON 863 maize will not have an adverse effect on human health. This conclusion has been endorsed by the UK expert committee, the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes.

In September 2004 the German authorities submitted a critique of the rat feeding study by Professor Pusztai. This highlighted a number of features of the study that appeared to indicate adverse effects of the GM maize. EFSA examined this document and issued a statement in September 2004 that confirmed its earlier conclusions. At the same time, the rat feeding study was independently re-examined by the GM sub-group of the UK's Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs, which confirmed that this was a normal and well-conducted study that did not indicate any adverse effects.

Horse Passports

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many horse passports have been issued since the introduction of the scheme. [1600]

Jim Knight: Based upon the data we have received from English Passport Issuing Organisations (PIOs), there has been 576,756 horse passports issued in England. Some of these were issued before the Horse Passport (England) Regulations came into effect.

Milk Price

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average price paid to farmers for a litre of milk has been in each year since 1980. [1537]

Jim Knight: The following table provides the annual average price paid to UK farmers for a litre of milk since 1980.

United Kingdom milk prices—calendar year farmgate milk prices[1]

Pence per litre including bonus payments[2]

	Units:
1980	12.52
1981	13.26
1982	14.54
1983	14.64
1984	14.61
1985	14.99
1986	15.53
1987	16.11
1988	17.28

United Kingdom milk prices—calendar year farmgate milk prices[1]

Pence per litre including bonus payments[2]

	Units:
1989	18.39
1990	18.47
1991	19.93
1992	20.95
1993	21.97
1994	22.43
1995	24.94
1996	25.02
1997	22.12
1998	19.37
1999	18.35
2000	16.93
2001	19.26
2002	17.11
2003	18.03
2004	18.46

Notes:

1. Average prices have been calculated from separate monthly surveys of milk purchasers conducted in England and Wales by Defra, in Scotland by SEERAD and in Northern Ireland by DARD. The surveys were introduced following changes to the milk marketing arrangements in 1994–95. The farmgate price is the average price received by producers, net of delivery charges. No deduction has been made for superlevy.

2. Prices include any retrospective bonuses made by purchasers. Provisional from 2004 onwards.

Sources:

Eurostat (1970 to 1994), from Milk Marketing Board statistics. Defra, SEERAD and DARD (1995 onwards), including bonus payments. Contact: Colin Beattie, DEFRA, Tel: + +44 (0)1904 455095, Email: colin.j.beattie@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Milk prices surveys Defra, SEERAD, DARD (NI)

National Fruit Collection

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the future of the custody of the National Fruit Collection. [1224]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 26 May 2005]:* The management of the National Fruit Collection (NFC) has been carried out by the Brogdale Horticulture Trust, under contract, since the early 1990s. We have recently awarded them a two year contract which will run until 31 March 2007.

Public Bodies

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are taken by her Department to *(a)* control and *(b)* reduce the cost of its associated public bodies. [1089]

Jim Knight: The information requested is as follows.

(a) Control

The Secretary of State appoints a Non-Executive board to oversee strategic direction and control of each executive NDPB.

Each board is required to establish an audit committee for risk management and control issues.

The department draws up management statements and financial memoranda for each of its Executive NDPBs. These documents are the framework for strategic control by the department.

(b) Reducing the cost of its associated public bodies

Defra looks at funding for NDPBs as part of the Departmental Spending Review keeping efficiency principles in mind.

Shared/lateral Drains

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to make an announcement about the possible transfer of shared and lateral drains to local water companies; and if she will make a statement. [1577]

Mr. Morley: Defra held a seminar in January 2005 for key stakeholders on the way forward for a possible transfer of private sewers to sewerage undertakers in England and Wales. Further information on the seminar is available on the Department's website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/industry/sewers/existing/index.htm

The Government intend to publish a decision paper on existing private sewers later this summer, but do not rule out the need to consult further on the scope and form of a potential transfer.

Xenotransplantation

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the recent World Health Organisation report on xenotransplantation; and what plans she has *(a)* to improve regulations and *(b)* to promote ethical standards in this area. [154]

Jane Kennedy: I have been asked to reply.

In 1998, the Government announced steps to tighten the regulation of the development of animal to human transplants (xenotransplantation) and issued a Health Service Circular—HSC July 1998/126: Clinical Procedures involving Xenotransplantation—to all national health service organisations to ensure that all hospitals comply with procedures to make xenotransplantation applications as set out by the United Kingdom Xenotransplantation Interim Regulatory Authority (UKXIRA). This document is available at: www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/ukxira/ukxann.htm

These regulations are continually reviewed by UKXIRA as outlined in section two of the fifth annual report, published in 2003, which resulted in UKXIRA recommending that the Government review the definition of xenotransplantation. This work is currently being taken forward to ensure that the United Kingdom's definition of xenotransplantation is in line with the revised, broader, definition adopted in the United States in 2000, and which the Council of Europe is expected to recommend for adoption by member states. The fifth annual report is also available from the website address above.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Amateur Sports Clubs

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made in reviewing the licence fee costs for amateur sports clubs; and if she will make a statement. [1456]

Mr. Caborn: The new fees under the Licensing Act 2003 were laid before this House on 20 January 2005, and came into effect on 7 February 2005. We have been mindful to create a fair and equitable licensing system which allows full cost recovery of the licensing authorities' administration, inspection and enforcement costs. We appreciate the important roles that amateur sports clubs play in local communities. As such, my Department held detailed discussions on fee levels with the Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR), and other sports bodies, both during the passage of the Act, and thereafter. My Department has agreed to monitor the impact of the fees on all sectors including sports clubs. We intend working closely with CCPR to that end. In addition, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made a commitment to an independent review of fee levels and associated costs, within a reasonable period after the new framework is fully introduced. That review will be chaired by Sir Leslie Elton. The results of the review will inform any necessary adjustments to the levels of fees, including those payable by amateur sports clubs.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what action she *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to engage community amateur sports clubs in helping schools meet the Government's target for the provision of sporting activity in schools. [1252]

Mr. Caborn: As part of the national strategy for Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is investing £9 million into increasing the percentage of 5 to 16-year-olds from School Sport Partnership schools who are members of, or participate in governing body or otherwise accredited sports clubs from 14 per cent. (2002) to 20 per cent. by 2006. This is being delivered through the national governing bodies of 22 sports. A further £9 million has been secured for the period 2006–08.

Consultants

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many consultants were employed by her Department in each of the last three years; and what their names were. [1335]

Mr. Caborn: The consultants employed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport during the last three years are as follows:

Company	*Start*
Kingshurst Consulting Group	2002
Richard Lambert	2002
Robert Palmer	2002
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	2002
Tim Gardom Associates	2002
Market and Opinion Research International (MORI)	2002
Sue Burgess Consultancy	2002
Stanton Marris	2002
Atkins Management Consultants	2003
Kingshurst Consulting Group	2003
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	2003
Gillian Ashmore	2003
Odgers, Ray and Berndtson	2003
Linklaters	2003
Denis Allnutt	2003
Interserve FM	2003
Anthony Lilley	2003
Philip Graf	2003
Research Centre for Museums and Galleries	2003
Shared Intelligence	2004
London Metropolitan University	2004
Welsh Economy Research Unit, Cardiff Business School	2004
University of Nottingham	2004
Shared Intelligence	2004
London Metropolitan University	2004
Welsh Economy Research Unit, Cardiff Business School	2004
University of Nottingham	2004
Opsis Renewal Consulting	2005
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	2005

Departmental Expenditure

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much public money her Department used to fund the celebration of the last *(a)* St. George's Day, *(b)* St. Patrick's Day and *(c)* European Day. [2186]

Mr. Lammy: No public money was spent by my Department on St. George's or St. Patrick's Day. For Europe Day (9 May), the flags of the European member states were flown on Parliament Square. The expected cost is £4,101.

Football Association Review

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when her Department expects the Football Association's review of its structure and governance to be published; and if she will make a statement. [917]

Mr. Caborn: While all sports national governing bodies are independent from Government, the Government's aim is for them to be fit for purpose. The FA is no exception.

The FA's board and council are committed to the FA Structural Review headed by Lord Burns. Lord Burns is currently undertaking that review, and he has indicated that he will report to the board in July 2005.

Gambling Act

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects to bring in secondary legislation specifying the dates for the implementation of the Gambling Act 2005; and if she will make a statement. [1323]

Mr. Caborn: A substantial number of statutory instruments will be needed to bring about the full implementation of the 2005 Act. We expect to lay an initial group before Parliament before the summer recess, which will include an order formally establishing the Gambling Commission in place of the Gaming Board from October. We are still considering, and will wish to consult interested parties, future dates for statutory instruments as part of the overall programme of work necessary to bring the Act fully into force, for which our current target is the third quarter of 2007.

Heritage Lottery Fund

Mark Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the Heritage Lottery Fund spent in 2004–05 on acquiring works of art and other artefacts for public museums; and what proportion of its expenditure the figure represents. [1208]

Mr. Lammy: During the financial year 2004–05 the Heritage Lottery Fund gave grants totalling £1,602,700 for acquisitions for public museums. This represented 0.46 per cent. of HLF's expenditure for 2004–05.

Licensing Changes

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the effect on small bars within larger premises of the recent change to licensing fees; and if she will make a statement. [678]

James Purnell: The Licensing Act 2003 is not expected to fully come into effect until November 2005. The fee bands under the Licensing Act 2003 are set by reference to non-domestic rateable values. The Government believe that this is the fairest way of ensuring that larger premises pay more than smaller premises and of accounting for location. Rateable values are also reviewed every five years and subject to specific appeal mechanisms.

In some cases, a small bar in a larger premises will have its own rateable value and its licence fee will reflect this. In other cases, the non domestic rateable value will apply to all parts of the premises, including an area designated for a licensable activity. The new fee structure includes a multiplier, and a higher fee, for larger premises which are exclusively or primarily engaged in the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made a commitment to an independent review of fee levels and associated costs, within a reasonable period after the new framework is fully introduced. The results of that review will inform any necessary adjustments to the levels of fees introduced under the Act.

South Bank Centre

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether she has been informed that *(a)* the South Bank Centre's vice chairman is employed by solicitors Herbert Smith and *(b)* that solicitors Herbert Smith were employed by South Bank Centre in its lease negotiations with the London Eye; and what assessment she had made of whether a conflict of interest existed. [1228]

Tessa Jowell: My former right hon. Friend, Chris Smith, who was Secretary of State at the time was aware at the time of his appointment to the South Bank board in June 1999 that Edward Walker-Arnott was then Senior Partner of Herbert Smith, one of the law firms used by South Bank Centre (SBC). Herbert Smith have been retained by SBC since 1994. Edward Walker-Arnott has now retired from the partnership and is a part-time consultant.

I am confident that SBC and Mr. Walker-Arnott have been careful to avoid any conflict arising: in particular the decision as to which solicitors to retain on any particular matter is made by the executive team at the SBC and not by the board or any board member.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what criteria her Department used to appoint Lord Hollick to be chairman of the South Bank Centre. [1231]

Tessa Jowell: The criteria used to appoint the Chair of the South Bank Board were that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate:

strong leadership skills, the ability to broker compromises among parties with fairly entrenched views, and advocacy skills;

experience of leading a large organisation and first hand knowledge of the public and private sectors;

a proven record of delivery of major projects involving mixed public/private financing;

a record of rigorous financial control; and

an understanding of the subsidised arts sector.

Lottery Funding

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the 10 parliamentary constituencies which received least in awards from Lottery sources in each year since 2000. [2103]

Mr. Caborn: The following lists show the 10 constituencies that received the least Lottery money in each calendar year since 2000. The constituency at the top of each list received the least Lottery money.

2000

Broxbourne
Aldershot
Dartford
Billericay
Birmingham, Yardley
Ilford, North
Hornchurch
Epping Forest
Birmingham, Northfield
Linlithgow

2001

Birmingham, Yardley
Denton and Reddish
Rayleigh
Wallasey
Hornchurch
West Renfrewshire
Birmingham, Northfield
Makerfield
Orpington
Ruislip Northwood

2002

Glasgow Pollok
Aberdeen, South
Birmingham, Hodge Hill
South Ribble
Grantham and Stamford
Edinburgh, West
Gedling
Birmingham, Yardley
North Warwickshire
Linlithgow

2003

Broxbourne
Bexleyheath and Crayford
Hertsmere
Spelthorne
Chatham and Aylesford
Stoke-on-Trent, North
Blaby
Aberdeen, South
Eltham
Linlithgow

2004

Fareham
Sheffield, Hallam
Elmet
Bury, South
Upminster
Broxbourne
East Devon
Lewisham, East
Coventry, North West
Linlithgow

2005—to date

Glasgow Baillieston
Hayes and Harlington
Hemel Hempstead
Spelthorne
Dewsbury
Bradford, South
Broxbourne
Mitcham and Morden
Crawley
Linlithgow

The 'location' of the project is based on the postcode given by the applicant, which is not necessarily where the benefit of the award will be felt. For example no single constituency would describe where a theatre tour took place.

This information is freely available from the Department's searchable Lottery award database at www.lottery.culture.gsi.gov.uk, which uses information supplied by the Lottery distributors.

Premier League Football (TV Rights)

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department *(a)* plans to have and *(b)* has had with the (i) European Commission, (ii) other Government Departments and (iii) other interested parties, regarding the collective bargaining of Premier League Football television rights. [781]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has had a number of meetings with the FA Premier League in the last six months to discuss a wide range of issues including the future of the Premier League's broadcasting rights. At these meetings the Secretary of State has made it clear that this is a competition issue in which the Government have no locus to intervene.

The Secretary of State has had no meetings with the European Commission or other Government Departments to discuss this issue, nor has she any plans to do so in the near future.

There has been, and will continue to be, ongoing discussion between a number of Whitehall Departments, including the Department for Trade and Industry, Department for Culture Media and Sport, and Cabinet Office, the regulators, Office for Fair Trading (OFT) and Office for Communication (OFCOM), and UKREP and DG Competition about the Premier League competition case.

At these meetings the Government have made clear that this is a competition issue in which the Government have no locus to intervene.

Royal Parks Constabulary

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) whether officers serving in the Royal Parks Constabulary over the age of 55 years will be required to take part in an eligibility exercise to assess their suitability for the Metropolitan Police; [641]

(2) what the employment rights of Royal Parks Constabulary officers will be if they are over the age of 55 years but do not complete an application form to join the Metropolitan Police. [642]

Mr. Lammy: Under paragraph 2 of Schedule 13 to the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 the Secretary of State may by regulations impose requirements on Royal Parks Constables for the purpose of establishing whether they are eligible to become Metropolitan Police Constables or be otherwise employed by the Metropolitan Police Authority.

Under paragraph 3 of Schedule 13 the Secretary of State may terminate the Crown employment of a constable who fails to comply with or satisfy any requirement imposed in relation to him by regulations made under paragraph 2. Constables whose Crown employment is terminated in this way are not to be treated as being dismissed. The Secretary of State also has power under paragraph 8 of that Schedule to make regulations providing for the consequences of termination of a constable's Crown employment (including the power to remove any entitlement to compensation).

No regulations under any of the above provisions have yet been made. The Royal Parks will shortly be consulting constables on the terms of the transfer of staff to the Metropolitan Police and a final decision on whether to make any Regulations under these powers will be made following this consultation.

Sexual Violence Counselling (Funding)

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* rape crisis organisations and *(b)* other organisations helping female survivors of sexual violence received funding from Lottery sources in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002, (iii) 2003 and (iv) 2004. [1550]

Mr. Caborn: The table shows the number of grants from Lottery sources made to rape crisis organisations and other organisations helping female survivors of sexual violence.

	Rape crisis organisations	*Other organisations helping female survivors of sexual violence*
2001	3	13
2002	7	10
2003	6	16
2004	5	13

The figures for the rape crisis organisations include all former Community Fund and New Opportunity Fund programmes, while those for projects in the other organisations only include former Community Fund programmes.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money was granted from Lottery sources to *(a)* individual rape crisis organisations and *(b)* other organisations helping female survivors of sexual violence in each year since 2001. [1551]

Mr. Caborn: The table outlines the amount of money granted from Lottery sources to individual rape crisis organisations and other organisations helping female survivors of sexual violence.

£

	Rape crisis organisations	*Other organisations helping female survivors of sexual violence*
2001	241,063	1,525,724
2002	707,096	200,769
2003	628,287	386,022
2004	207,299	1,212,822

The figures for individual rape crisis organisations include all former Community Fund and New Opportunity Fund programmes, while those for projects in other organisations helping female survivors of sexual violence only include former Community Fund programmes.

Sports Instructors

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of schools in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* England have access to specialist sports instructors to assist in the delivery of the Government's target for sporting activity in schools. [1253]

Mr. Caborn: All secondary schools in England have access to specialist PE teachers. In Staffordshire, 29 per cent. of schools are also within a School Sport Partnership (SSP) which will increase to 46 per cent. by September 2005. In England, 54 per cent. of schools are within a SSP which will increase to at least 75 per cent. by September 2005. All secondary schools within a SSP appoint a school sport co-ordinator and all primary and special schools a link teacher. By 2006, all maintained schools will be within a partnership.

A total of 3,000 full and part-time qualified community sports coaches will also be employed by 2006 to assist with the delivery of high-quality sport within SSPs. In Staffordshire there are currently 28 coaches and 857 nationwide.

Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether her Department's Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme extends to Northern Ireland. [2260]

Mr. Caborn: Sport is a devolved matter and as such the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) currently operates in England only. In addition to meeting the required performance standard for their sport, TASS athletes must have a British passport and be habitually based in England, or receive the majority of their sporting services in England, in order to be eligible for the scheme. Athletes must also be able to represent either Great Britain or England in competition.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what access Northern Ireland sports people have to the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme programme; [1191]

(2) how many athletes from Northern Ireland have been awarded a Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme scholarship; [1192]

(3) what the process is by which scholarships are awarded for the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme in Northern Ireland. [1193]

Mr. Caborn: Sport is a devolved matter and as such the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) currently operates in England only. In addition to meeting the required performance standard for their sport, TASS athletes must have a British passport and be habitually based in England, or receive the majority of their sporting services in England, in order to be eligible for the scheme. Athletes must also be able to represent either Great Britain or England in competition. For the first year of the programme (2004–05) no athletes from Northern Ireland received support from TASS as none met the eligibility criteria.

Tourism

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* the budget for the promotion of British tourism and *(b)* total public spending on promoting British tourism was in each year since 1997. [325]

James Purnell: My Department is responsible for grant-in-aid to VisitBritain, a proportion of which is used specifically to promote Britain overseas. Grant-in-aid to VisitBritain itself forms a part of wider public spending on tourism at national, regional and local levels, which in 2003–04 was estimated at over £285 million across Britain. The following figures relate only to the grant-in-aid paid, and payable, to VisitBritain, for which my Department is responsible.

(a) VisitBritain's total available budget for the promotion of tourism over the period 2005–06 to 2007–08 was announced in December 2004, following the Spending Review. It is as follows:

	£ million
2005–06	49.05
2006–07	50.05
2007–08	50.05

That represents an additional £2 million over this three-year period.

(b) The total allocations of grant-in-aid by my Department to VisitBritain (and its predecessor bodies the British Tourist Authority and the English Tourism Council up to 2002–03) were:

	Grant-in-aid[1]
1997–98	44.9
1998–99	44.7
1999–2000	47.8
2000–01	48.0
2001–02	[2]45.1
2002–03	47.1
2003–04	47.9
2004–05	48.4

[1] Figures for 1998–99 to 2002–03 comprise funding for BTA, ETB and ETC.

[2] Up to April 2001, £1.5 million per year was allocated to the BTA promotion of London as a gateway to Britain.

These figures include amounts allocated to VisitBritain (and, before 31 March 2003, to the English Tourism Council) for the marketing of England within Great Britain.

Additional amounts of £14.2 million in 2001–02, and £19 million in 2002–03, were allocated to the British Tourist Authority from the Reserve to help the tourism sector to recover from the impacts of the foot and mouth outbreak, and the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

Volunteers (Sport)

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to encourage volunteers in sport. [1715]

Mr. Caborn: Sport is already the single biggest volunteering activity in England, with 26 per cent. of volunteering going on in sports related activities. There are an estimated 6 million sports volunteers, representing 15 per cent. of the adult population and contributing over 1 billion hours.

Volunteers are a key driver for change if we are to achieve our targets of increasing participation in sport and physical activity. The National Strategic Partnership for Volunteering in Sport was launched last October to provide a single strategic voice to drive forward, promote and develop volunteering in sport and the wider voluntary sector across Government and other partners.

Sport England's partnership with Volunteering England, the national development agency for volunteering, is aimed at ensuring a joined-up approach to volunteering between sport and other sectors. National Governing Bodies of Sport set targets for raising the number of volunteers within their Whole Sport Plans that are agreed with Sport England.

Step into Sport is one of the eight workstrands of the PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy, which aims to provide a simple framework of opportunities for young people in leadership and volunteering through sport.

In March, the Russell Commission recommended a framework that will deliver a step change in the diversity, quality and quantity of young people's volunteering, with the aspiration to attract 1 million more young volunteers across all forms of activity. This year's Budget announced funding for the framework of up to £150 million that will include matching funds from the private sector and contributions from Sport England.

2005 is "The Year of The Volunteer", a Home Office initiative run by the Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England to promote volunteering across a range of sectors throughout the year in which August is the themed month of sport.

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet Memorandum

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister what representations the Government has received from members of the United States Congress in connection with the authenticity of a document purported to be a Cabinet memorandum dated 23 July 2002. [1458]

The Prime Minister: As far as I am aware the Government have not received any representations from those mentioned on this matter.

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister whether the Government have instituted an inquiry into the leaking of a document purported to be a Cabinet memorandum dated 23 July 2002. [1459]

The Prime Minister: In order to safeguard security and investigative arrangements, it has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment on the conduct and outcome of leak inquiries.

Drugs (Colombia)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Colombian government on drugs and related armed violence. [1056]

The Prime Minister: We have regular discussions with the Colombian Government at ministerial and official level. My hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Bill Rammell), the former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, raised counter-narcotics work with his Colombian counterparts during his February 2005 visit to Colombia, as did my right hon. Friend the Minister for the armed forces during his visit in October last year.

Foreign Affairs Policy

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on mechanisms for co-ordinating policy on foreign affairs between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for International Development, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Defence. [1276]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the Written Statement on Ministerial Committees of the Cabinet I made to the House on 24 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 12WS.

G8 Summit

Mr. Drew: To ask the Prime Minister what plans he has to meet representatives from churches and non-government organisations at their forthcoming lobby to Make Poverty History in advance of the Gleneagles summit of the G8. [2047]

The Prime Minister: My officials and I will have meetings and discussions with a wide range of organisations and individuals, including churches and non-government organisations, in preparation for the Gleneagles summit.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister whether he was given copies of internal Foreign Office briefing material on the legality of the war in Iraq before the commencement of hostilities. [1457]

The Prime Minister: The Government received advice from the Attorney-General on the legality of the conflict in Iraq. As the Government's chief legal adviser his advice is the final, authoritative decision in Government.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Prime Minister whether John Scarlett had discussions with the Iraq Survey Group on the drafting of the reports of their findings. [1780]

The Prime Minister: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment on security matters. The Iraq Survey Group was responsible for the findings of its reports.

Ministerial Duties

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Prime Minister how many hours he spent performing his official duties in the week commencing 9 May. [1155]

The Prime Minister: As is normal practice, my week was spent meeting Ministerial colleagues and others and carrying out other official business.

VE Day Celebrations (Moscow)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Prime Minister what factors he took into account in reaching his decision not to attend the VE Day celebrations in Moscow. [1377]

The Prime Minister: The principal commemoration of the end of World War 2 will be on 10 July 2005, which falls between the anniversaries of VE and VJ days. Her Majesty The Queen will lead the celebrations and I shall also attend. The Ministry of Defence, in consultation with other Government Departments and veterans, made the announcement to this effect on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 597.

The Deputy Prime Minister represented the Government at the VE day celebrations in Moscow on 9 May.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Living Standards

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what assessment she has made of changes in living standards for women since 1997. [545]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply. Table 1.2 of "Individual Incomes of men and women 1996–97 to 2003–04" (Women and Equality Unit, Department of Trade and Industry) shows that the median disposable individual income of women rose by 29 per cent. in real terms from 1996–97 to 2003–04. Table D9.1 of "Households Below Average Income 1994–05 to 2003–04" (Department for Work and Pensions) shows that the risk for adult women of living in households with less than 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median household income held constant in real terms fell from 18 per cent. in 1996–97 to 10 per cent. in 2003–04 before housing costs, and from 24 per cent. to 13 per cent. after housing costs. Further related information is available in both publications.

Poverty

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what plans the Government have to curb poverty among women. [544]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply. The sixth annual 'Opportunity for all' report (Cm 6239), published in September 2004, sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this strategy.

The Government are determined to tackle child poverty, with women disproportionately represented in households with children living in relative low-income. The Government's reforms since 1997 have reduced the number of children living in relative low-income households by over half a million.

The Government are also providing support to the poorest pensioners through the pension credit. Women pensioners, many of whom have not been able to build up an entitlement to a full basic state pension in their own right in the past, have been among those to benefit the most from pension credit.

TRANSPORT

Babergh District Council

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the transport consequences of Babergh district council's development plan. [2303]

Ms Buck: Representations on the transport policies contained within the Babergh local plan, second deposit draft, were made to the district council during the public consultation in 2003. Assessments of the transport consequences of individual developments will be the responsibility of the district council upon receipt of planning applications.

British Summer Time

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will assess the likely effects of continuing British summer time throughout the year on the number of road accidents in England and Wales. [1626]

Dr. Ladyman: No recent assessment of the likely effects of continuing British summer time (BST) throughout the year has been carried out.

Congestion Charge

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with the Mayor of London regarding the proposed extension of the congestion charging zone in London. [1147]

Ms Buck: The London congestion charging scheme is the responsibility of the Mayor, not the Government. However, Ministers have regular meetings with the Mayor at which a wide range of transport matters are discussed.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions his Department has undertaken with businesses and business groups regarding the effect of the proposed westward extension of the congestion charging zone on road routes to Heathrow airport. [1148]

Ms Buck: The London congestion charging scheme is the responsibility of the Mayor, not the Government. The Department has regular meetings with a range of businesses and business groups interested in the western extension of congestion charging. The Mayor has revised his Transport Strategy to allow for a western extension of the central London congestion charging zone. A full 12-week public consultation on the extension was launched on 6 May. Any proposal for a further extension to the scheme is a matter for the Mayor.

Container Traffic

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what his estimate is of the volume of container traffic which will enter the UK through east coast ports over the next three years; [1573]

(2) what his assessment is of the potential for container-based exports from east coast ports over the next three years. [1574]

Dr. Ladyman: No such estimate or assessment has been made. The Transport Committee's Report on Ports in November 2003 noted that various independent studies were consistent in concluding that the volume of container traffic at UK ports as a whole could grow by between 4 per cent. and 5 per cent. per annum on average to 2015. The Department has now commissioned consultants to produce national port traffic forecasts by region to 2030. These forecasts will be published as part of the forthcoming review of ports policy.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the proportion of container traffic entering the UK through *(a)* Harwich, *(b)* Felixstowe and *(c)* London which had its final destination in the Midlands in the last period for which figures are available. [1894]

Dr. Ladyman: Separate information is not available for individual ports. However, it is estimated that in 2003 about one in six trips resulting from the collection of containers by lorry from ports in Essex, Greater London or Suffolk had a final destination in the East Midlands or West Midlands Government Office Regions. The Department does not collect similar information about the destination of containers that are moved by rail.

Source:

Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport 2003

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made for the average time taken for a fully laden container ship arriving at the coast at *(a)* Harwich, *(b)* Felixstowe, *(c)* London and *(d)* Teesport being completely unloaded in the last period for which figures are available. [1895]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the percentage of container traffic which entered the UK through *(a)* Harwich, *(b)* Felixstowe and *(c)* London which had final destinations north of the M62 in the last period for which figures are available. [1896]

Dr. Ladyman: Separate information is not available for individual ports. However, it is estimated that in 2003 about one in 12 trips resulting from the collection of containers by lorry from ports in Essex, Greater London or Suffolk had a final destination north of the M62[1]. The Department does not collect similar information about the destination of containers that are moved by rail.

[1] Including the Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and West Yorkshire Metropolitan areas.

Source:

Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport 2003

EU Legislation

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what EU legislation was implemented by *(a)* the Vehicle Excise Duty (Reduced Pollution) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, *(b)* the Public Service Vehicles (Conditions of Fitness, Equipment, Use and Certification) (Amendment) Regulations 2002, *(c)* the End-of-Life Vehicles Regulations 2003 (Composition and Content), *(d)* the Motor Fuel (Amendment) Regulations 2003 and *(e)* the Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2004. [1714]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The Vehicle Excise Duty (Reduced Pollution) (Amendment) Regulations 2000 (S.I. 2000/3274) amended the requirements as to rate and content of particulate emissions (compliance with which means the reduced pollution requirements are satisfied). This was to reflect the particulate emission levels set out in Directive 1999/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 1999 on the approximation of the laws of the member states relating to measures to be taken against the emission of gaseous and particulate pollutants from compression ignition engines for use in vehicles and against the emission of gaseous and particulate pollutants from positive ignition engines fuelled with natural gas or liquefied petroleum gas for use in vehicles and amending Council Directive 88/77/EEC.

These regulations have been revoked and replaced by the Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations 2002 (S.I. 2002/2742) (see in particular regulation 2 and Schedule 1 and regulation 5 and Schedule 2).

(b) The Public Service Vehicles (Conditions of Fitness, Equipment, Use and Certification) (Amendment) Regulations 2002 (S.I. 2002/489) do not in fact implement any Community legislation but simply amend the fees payable in respect of certificates of initial fitness, type approvals and certificates of conformity.

(c) The End-of-Life Vehicles Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/2635) implement provisions of Directive 2000/53/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 September 2000 on end-of-life vehicles. Although DfT (and DEFRA) has a policy interest in these regulations they are primarily the responsibility of DTI and I am responding on their behalf in order to be as helpful as possible.

The regulations impose both requirements to ensure vehicle materials and components do not contain specified substances and information requirements for producers regarding such materials and components. The regulations also introduce certificates of destruction and requirements in relation thereto as well as regulating the treatment of end-of-life vehicles.

(d) The Motor Fuel (Composition and Content) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/3078) implement Directive 2003/17/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 March 2003 amending Directive 98/70/EC relating to the quality of petrol and diesel fuels.

Essentially these regulations prohibit the distribution or sale of petrol or diesel from 2009 if its sulphur content exceeds 10 milligrams per kilogram. These regulations prohibit the sale of gas oil intended for use in tractors or non-road mobile machinery if the sulphur content is 2,000 or more milligrams per kilogram and from 2008 its sale is prohibited if the sulphur content is more than 1,000 milligrams per kilogram.

(e) The Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004/568) implement three directives.

Firstly, there is implementation of Council Directive 94/55/EC of 21 November 1994 on the approximation of the laws of the member states with regard to the transport of dangerous goods by road (as amended by Directive 2000/61/EC and Directive 2003/28/EC) in application of the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road—and in particular the latest biennial revisions (up to 2003) thereof.

Secondly, there is implementation of Council Directive 96/49/EC of 23 July 1996 on the approximation of the laws of the member states with regard to the transport of dangerous goods by rail (as amended by Directive 2000/62/EC and Directive 2003/29/EC) in application of the dangerous goods part of the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF)—and in particular the latest biennial revisions (up to 2003) thereof.

Thirdly, the Regulations implement the obligations of Council Directive 1999/36/EC of 29 April 1999 on transportable pressure equipment including the application of requirements for the placing of such equipment on the market and making provision in relation to conformity assessments.

Freight Transport

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress his Department has made in achieving a shift in freight transportation from road to rail since 1997. [1018]

Derek Twigg: Between 1997–98 and 2003–04 (the latest year for which figures are available), levels of freight moved by rail increased from 16.9 billion to 18.9 billion tonne kilometres—an increase of around 12 per cent. It is estimated that in 2003-04 the rail freight industry saved 1.35 billion lorry kilometres.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what Government financial support is available to support a shift in freight transportation from road to rail. [1019]

Derek Twigg: Over the next two years, the Government will provide over £24 million per annum in grant funding to support the transfer of traffic from road to rail. The Government also provide support for rail freight through their funding of rail infrastructure—for instance, the £7.6 billion West Coast Route Modernisation programme, which will substantially increase capacity for rail freight from the channel ports to the north west, and the circa £30 million Felixstowe-Nuneaton gauge enhancement.

Rail Freight

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to upgrade rail freight between the east coast ports and the Midlands of England. [1260]

Derek Twigg: The £30 million gauge enhancement project between Felixstowe and the west coast main line was completed in October 2004 on time and under budget. This will allow 9ft 6in containers to be carried on standard wagons for the first time between the Haven ports and the key rail freight terminals in the midlands and the north west.

Future Heathrow

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* direct and *(b)* indirect financial backing his Department has provided to Future Heathrow. [2289]

Ms Buck: The information requested is as follows:

(a) None and *(b)* none.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons he attended the launch of Future Heathrow. [2290]

Ms Buck: The Secretary of State attended the launch to set out the Government's policy in relation to Heathrow, as contained in the White Paper, "The Future of Air Transport", published in December 2003. He confirmed the importance of taking a forward-looking, strategic approach to dealing with the pressures caused by the increasing need to travel while at the same time meeting our commitment to protect the environment in which we live.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the nature of the relationship between his Department and Future Heathrow. [2322]

Ms Buck: Future Heathrow has the same access to information on the project of the sustainable development of Heathrow as do any other parties with an interest in Heathrow issues.

Future of Transport White Paper

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether a Sustainable Development Appraisal was undertaken prior to publication of The Future of Transport White Paper. [1238]

Ms Buck: A Sustainable Development Appraisal of the 'Future of Transport' White Paper was published on 21 March 2005, and can be viewed on the Department's website. Copies of the appraisal have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

M1 Speed Limit

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason a 50 mph speed limit has been imposed for the first few yards of the northbound carriageway of the M1 motorway. [1630]

Dr. Ladyman: A 50 mph speed limit was introduced in 1994 following the construction of the A406 westbound link road. The link road was constructed to ease congestion at the Staples Corner roundabout.

Due to the constraints of the site it was not possible to build this section of road to full motorway design standards. The 50 mph limit was introduced in the interests of road safety.

New Cars

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average weight of a new car has been in each year since 1985. [1490]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not available.

One Train-operating Company

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many complaints his Department has received about the One train-operating company. [2302]

Derek Twigg: This information is not held centrally by the Department. Information regarding complaints can be obtained from Train Operating Companies or the Rail Passengers Council.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport against what criteria the performance of the One train operating company will be assessed when deciding whether or not to renew its franchise. [2305]

Derek Twigg: Franchises are let by open competition. The current One franchise is not due to expire until April 2011, or April 2014 if specified performance targets are met. The exact criteria for its re-franchising will not be determined until nearer that time.

Pelican and Puffin Crossings

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has commissioned on the effectiveness of *(a)* pelican and *(b)* puffin crossings. [1791]

Ms Buck: Pelican crossings were introduced in 1969. We have no recent studies of their effectiveness but studies into the effects of converting a zebra to a pelican crossing, comparisons of pedestrian crossings, and the comparative safety of pedestrian crossings were conducted in the years following their introduction. Reports are available from TRL Limited (formerly the Transport Research Laboratory).

Research carried out by the Transport and Research Laboratory for my Department in 1992 following the introduction of new puffin crossing estimated an average net benefit of approximately £10,000 per site per annum through reduced vehicle delays, giving an overall benefit across the country of about £50 million, if installations were to take place at all sites.

The Highways Agency commissioned work from the London Accident Analysis Unit in 1996 to carry out a comparative accident study at five pelican crossing conversions to puffins. The investigations found that puffin was no worse than a pelican crossing but in some cases it was better in terms of accidents involving pedestrians.

Further research has been commissioned by the Department for Transport to examine the effectiveness of puffin crossings at six sites and the effect of the new crossing on pedestrian and driver behaviour. This work will conclude by the end of this year.

Ports Strategy

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to bring forward a national ports strategy. [1572]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department announced in "The Future of Transport" White Paper (Cm 6234, paragraph 7.28) their intention to review the national framework of ports policy once decisions have been taken on the outstanding applications for major container-port development. That remains the case.

Railway Punctuality

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the change in punctuality levels on the railways between 1998 and 2004; and if he will make a statement. [1670]

Derek Twigg: The Moving Annual Average (MAA) of the Public Performance Measure (PPM) of rail performance fell from 89.7 per cent. at March 1998 to 86.1 per cent. in the month before the Hatfield accident (October 2000).

The Hatfield accident revealed the degree to which the network had deteriorated under Railtrack and led to temporary speed restrictions being imposed across the network. The levels of PPM subsequently fell to 64 per cent. in the three months following the accident.

Since Hatfield there has been a slow recovery in performance.

Network Rail and the train companies have put in place programmes to reduce the major causes of delay with targeted plans which have delivered improvement.

There has been a continual and increasing rate of improvement in rail performance with the moving annual average of PPM increasing from 78.0 per cent. at the end of March 2002 to 82.8 per cent, at the end December 2004.

Road Accidents

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he collects on the relative likelihood of being involved in a road accident in *(a)* a saloon car and *(b)* a 4 × 4 vehicle. [1488]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available.

Solar-powered Devices

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what use *(a)* is being made and *(b)* is planned for solar-powered devices on, over or under the road network; whether trials of such equipment are scheduled; and if he will make a statement. [1629]

Dr. Ladyman: Individual solar-powered devices are used by highway authorities as an energy source on road side equipment, such as speed actuated signs, where practicable and cost effective. The Highways Agency is undertaking trials into the effectiveness of solar panels mounted alongside trunk roads. A separate trial is evaluating the use of the road as a collector for solar energy.

Terrorism

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what exercises the *(a)* armed forces and *(b)* emergency services have carried out with (i) airlines and (ii) the commercial aviation sector in relation to the terrorist threat from (A) surface to air missiles and (B) hijacked aircraft used as weapons. [796]

Ms Buck: Counter Terrorist exercises are the responsibility of the Home Office. The Department for Transport and the Ministry of Defence participate in and facilitate such exercises as necessary.

It is not appropriate to disclose further details about these exercises.

Train Evacuation (Burton-upon-Trent)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason a mass evacuation of a train took place on 16 May near Burton-upon-Trent; what investigations are being carried out into this incident; whether rolling stock failure was a cause of the incident; what assessment he has made of the safety implications of the incident; and if he will make a statement. [1480]

Derek Twigg: At 09:50 on 16 May, the 06:40 Virgin Cross Country Newcastle Central–Bournemouth service was evacuated near Burton-on-Trent station, because of the fire risk posed by leaking diesel fuel. Network Rail and the emergency services attended the incident.

The incident is now under investigation by Network Rail and the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) HM Railway Inspectorate (HMRI), the Government's independent railway health and safety regulator.

Two of the train's diesel fuel tanks had ruptured leading to the leakage of diesel fuel onto the track. The causes of the fuel tank ruptures are still under investigation.

All passengers were evacuated safely by 10:10 and no fire was reported subsequently. HSE supports fully the precautionary approach taken by the train's crew and Network Rail staff in evacuating passengers. HSE's HMRI will ensure that any lessons are learnt.

Train-related Deaths

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have died on train lines in each year since 1990; and how many of them were suicides. [1730]

Derek Twigg: The following table provides *(a)* the details of the number of people that have died on Britain's train lines since 1990 and *(b)* how many of these were recorded as suicides.

Total suicides and overall annual fatalities on Britain's railways, 1990–2004

	(a) Total fatalities[1]	*(b) Suicides*[2]
1990	389	157
1991–92[3]	444	183
1992–93	303	132
1993–94	303	141
1994–95	296	135
1995–96	274	139

Total suicides and overall annual fatalities on Britain's railways, 1990–2004

	(a) Total fatalities[1]	*(b) Suicides*[2]
1996–97	277	119
1997–98	313	132
1998–99	286	115
1999–2000	339	133
2000–01	338	132
2001–02	307	124
2002–03	306	118
2003–04	277	101
2004[4,5]	212	43

[1] The total fatalities group includes fatalities of passengers, railway employees and other members of the public, trespasses and suicides.

[2] Suicides are a sub-set of the total fatalities group.

[3] 1991–92 was a 15-month period (1 January 1991 to 31 March 1992).

[4] Of the 151 trespasser fatalities in 2004, a total of 98 are suspected suicides (but only 43 have yet been recorded formally as suicide).

[5] Provisional figures for the nine-month period (1 April 2004 to 31 December 2004).

UK Merchant Marine

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what exercises the *(a)* armed forces and *(b)* emergency services have carried out with (i) ships and (ii) staff of the merchant marine to prepare for terrorist risks (A) at sea, (B) from the sea to coastal regions and (C) in ports. [795]

Dr. Ladyman: Counter Terrorist (CT) exercises are the responsibility of the Home Office. The Department for Transport (DfT) participates in and facilitates such exercises as necessary. DfT has been involved in six maritime CT exercises since the beginning of 2005.

It is not appropriate to disclose further details about these exercises.

Vision Zero

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the Vision Zero project. [1825]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department for Transport (DfT) is supporting a research project being conducted by the Stockholm Environment Institute at the University of York entitled Vision Zero—A Risk Assessment of Adopting a Target of Zero for Road Traffic Accident Fatalities and Serious Injuries. The researchers submitted the idea to the DfT Horizons programme which funds research intended to alert and inform the Department about long-term potential opportunities for, and risks to, achieving our policy and operational objectives.

Work is currently in progress and a report is expected later this year on the Swedish experience of adopting a Vision Zero policy and the potential risks, costs, benefits and opportunities of a 30-year Vision Zero strategy in the UK. Further details about the project are given on the Department's Research Database http://www.rmd.dft.gov.uk where the results of the work will appear on completion.

DEFENCE

Scottish Infantry Regiments

13. **Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will meet representatives of veterans' organisations to discuss changes in the Scottish infantry. [1928]

Mr. Touhig: My colleagues have had several meetings with interested organisations to discuss these changes, and I look forward to meeting veterans' representatives to address the variety of issues of interest to them. Principal among these will be the many commemorative events in July to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the second world war.

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* complement and *(b)* strength is of each of the six Scottish infantry regiments; and what it has been in each year since 2001. [1498]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member once the current data for 2005 have been collated. The establishment, trained strength and difference of each of the Scottish infantry regiments from January 2001 to January 2004 are as follows:

Highlanders	*Establishment*	*Trained strength*	*Difference*
2001	610	495	-115
2002[1]	665	520	-145
2003[1]	625	520	-105
2004	625	525	-100

[1] Strength totals for 2002 and 2003 exclude Gurkhas attached to the regiment: 100 in 2002 and 110 in 2003.

Black Watch[1]	*Establishment*	*Trained strength*	*Difference*
2001	670	565	-105
2002	675	535	-140
2003	675	585	-90
2004	675	635	-40

[1] Black Watch totals exclude BW LAD REME.

Royal Scots	*Establishment*	*Trained strength*	*Difference*
2001	610	515	-95
2002	620	495	-125
2003	620	525	-95
2004	620	555	-65

Royal Highland Fusiliers	*Establishment*	*Trained strength*	*Difference*
2001	605	530	-75
2002	620	530	-90
2003	620	540	-80
2004	620	580	-40

King's Own Scottish Borderers	*Establishment*	*Trained strength*	*Difference*
2001	640	585	-55
2002	620	645	25
2003	665	630	-35
2004	670	585	-85

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders	*Establishment*	*Trained strength*	*Difference*
2001	610	590	-20
2002	620	580	-40
2003	625	575	-50
2004	615	570	-45

Notes:
1. The figures are at 1 January each year.
2. All figures have been rounded to the nearest five.
3. Totals are for Regular Army officers and soldiers.
4. FTRS have been excluded.
5. Totals include members of other arms/services attached to each regiment.

Defence Procurement

15. **Mark Tami:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reviews have been undertaken of project management arrangements with his Department's procurement processes. [1930]

Mr. Ingram: The Acquisition Policy Board, chaired by the Minister for Defence Procurement, has recently been established to oversee acquisition processes across the MOD. These processes are constantly under review. For example the DPA Forward programme is implementing the Chief of Defence Procurement's stocktake of Smart Acquisition.

In May the National Audit Office published a report on Effective Project Control, comparing the MOD with overseas and industry practice. It identified a number of examples where the MOD compared well to their "gold standard" including the refit of HMS Illustrious, the Titan and Trojan engineer tanks and the Future Infantry Soldier Technology project.

Peter Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress in procurement of two new aircraft carriers. [1931]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Wimbledon (Stephen Hammond), *Official Report*, col. 979.

Iraq

17. **Mr. Heath:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on British forces stationed in Iraq. [1932]

John Reid: British Forces are in Iraq at the request of the Iraqi Government, as part of the multi-national effort to help the Iraqi people achieve stability, democracy and prosperity. There are now around 8,500 UK troops in Iraq, providing security and building the capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces.

25. **Mr. Francois:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many reservists are deployed in Iraq. [1940]

Mr. Touhig: As at 1 June the number of Reservists deployed in Iraq was 583.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the security situation in Iraq. [1936]

John Reid: Insurgents continue in their efforts to destabilise progress in Iraq. Despite a recent upsurge, the number of insurgent attacks has declined since the January elections, with Iraq Security Forces conducting a number of anti-insurgent operations, both independently and with coalition support.

Defence Aviation Repair Agency

18. **John Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has completed his review of the future of the Defence Aviation Repair Agency; and if he will make a statement. [1933]

Mr. Ingram: We are examining a range of options for the future of the Defence Aviation Repair Agency. This work is being done objectively, and the basis for any final decisions will rest on the quality of support to the front line and overall value for money.

I hope to be in a position to make an announcement on the way ahead for DARA before the summer recess. We will, of course, be consulting with our colleagues in the Welsh Assembly and the Trades Unions before any final decisions are taken in respect of DARA operations at St. Athan.

Royal Marine Corps

19. **Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the role of the Royal Marine Corps over the next five years. [1934]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Marines will continue to provide the amphibious infantry component of our joint expeditionary capabilities. As part of the Joint Rapid Reaction Force, they will be at high readiness for a range of tasks requiring versatility, high mobility and sustainability. In recent years, the Royal Marines have operated with great success in Iraq, Afghanistan and Northern Ireland. They are currently introducing important new equipment including Viking protected vehicles and Bowman radios.

Asian Tsunami (Relief Operations)

20. **Andrew Gwynne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what role UK armed forces are playing in relief operations for the people affected by the Asian tsunami. [1935]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence and the United Kingdom's Armed Forces responded quickly and effectively to the tsunami disaster, working closely with the Department for International Development to provide military support to the relief effort. These operations ceased in February, and all UK forces involved have now returned home or are deployed on other operations.

Army Manning

22. **Mr. Bacon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on manning levels in the Army. [1937]

Mr. Touhig: As at 1 April 2005 the total trained strength of the Army was 102,440 against a requirement of 104,170—a shortfall of 1.7 per cent. This is within the plus one per cent. or minus two per cent. tolerance set by the Ministry of Defence's Public Sector Agreement, and represents an improvement on recent years.

Royal Anglian Regiment

23. **Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where he expects the 1st and 2nd battalions of the Royal Anglian Regiment to be permanently based under his proposals to re-structure the infantry. [1938]

Mr. Ingram: Basing arrangements for infantry regiments under the Future Infantry Structure have yet to be determined.

Royal Welsh Regiment

24. **Ian Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the headquarters of the newly established Royal Welsh Regiment will be in Wales. [1939]

Mr. Ingram: A review has recently been initiated to determine the most effective and efficient method of delivering Infantry Regimental Headquarters (RHQs) functions in support of the Future Infantry Structure. This review will consider the number and location of RHQs required across the infantry. It is too early to speculate on the outcome of this review in relation to the Royal Welsh, or any other, Regiment.

Argentine Air Force

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many encounters RAF combat air patrols have had with the Argentine Air Force since January. [1242]

Mr. Ingram: There have been no encounters between RAF Combat Patrol Aircraft and aircraft from the Argentine Air Force since January 2005.

FRES

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Future Rapid Effect System will enter service with the Army. [1929]

Mr. Ingram: The FRES programme is currently in the initial Assessment Phase. An In-Service Date will not be set until the main investment decision, but initial estimates are that FRES will enter service early in the next decade, with a phased approach to achieving full operational capability thereafter.

Kellogg, Brown and Root

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the role and responsibilities of Kellogg, Brown and Root in the design and build of the two aircraft carriers commissioned by the Government. [1920]

Mr. Ingram: In line with our announcement of 8 February 2005, discussions continue on the roles and responsibilities of the Aircraft Carrier Alliance Participants, including those of the preferred Physical Integrator Kellogg, Brown and Root Ltd. UK.

Ulster Defence Regiment

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made towards the establishment of a fund to assist the widows and dependants of Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers in Northern Ireland who lost their lives in the service of the community; and if he will make a statement. [1453]

Mr. Touhig: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

TREASURY

Art Acquisition (Goodison Report)

Mark Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to publish a response to the report he commissioned in 2003 from Sir Nicholas Goodison on the acquisition of works of art. [1209]

Mr. Des Browne: Since the publication of the Goodison Review in January 2004, the Government have made substantial progress in taking forward many of the recommendations. In the 2004 Spending Review the Government announced that:

> annual funding for the National Heritage Memorial Fund will double by 2007–08, compared to 2004–05;
>
> the Renaissance in the Regions programme for regional museums will be extended to all nine English regions; and
>
> the free access commitment, which currently covers the main national museums and galleries, and the VAT refund scheme that helps deliver free access, will be extended to university museums and galleries.

Other recommendations are being considered as part of The Treasury's and HMRC's ongoing work. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport is also transferring a number of administrative functions to the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (formerly Resource) as recommended by the Goodison Review.

Child Benefits (UK Citizens Abroad)

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many UK citizens living abroad are in receipt of *(a)* child benefit and *(b)* child tax credit. [2019]

Dawn Primarolo: Apart from under specified circumstances, child benefit (CB) and child tax credit (CTC) are only payable to people who are present and ordinarily resident in the UK. The residence rules for eligibility to CB and CTC are explained on the HMRC website, at www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/residence-rules.htm.

About 10,000 CB recipients are classified as "overseas" in the published geographical analyses. Around 6,000 of which are also claimants in child tax credit awards.

Child Trust Funds

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the number of Child Trust Fund vouchers sent out to date; how many vouchers he estimates have not been claimed; how many vouchers have been used to establish Child Trust Fund accounts; and if he will make a statement. [1310]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Child Trust Fund vouchers do not need to be claimed, they are sent automatically to parents of eligible children once child benefit has been awarded. Figures for the number of vouchers sent and the number of accounts opened are being published quarterly on the HMRC website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_trust_funds/child-trust-funds.htm. The first set of quarterly figures was published on 31 May.

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter dated 8 March from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding his constituents Mr. and Mrs. K. Milne of Peterhead. [1188]

Dawn Primarolo: A full reply to the hon. Member's letter was sent on 16 May.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what criteria the Valuation Office Agency will use to value a residence during the council tax revaluation in England. [1107]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is available on the Valuation Office Agency website at: http://www.voa.gov.uk/council_tax/ct-reval-2007/introduction-nov04.htm.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what sum raised from council tax in Wales in each year since 1997 was reported to HM Treasury for the purpose of assessing the block grant for Wales under the Barnett formula. [1280]

Mr. Des Browne: Expenditure in Wales financed by council tax is not part of the block grant payable by the Wales Office to the Welsh Assembly Government.

Customs and Excise

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on ongoing criminal investigations into cases of fraud by staff working for Customs and Excise in which charges have not yet been brought. [1141]

Dawn Primarolo: There are no ongoing criminal investigations by HM Revenue and Customs into cases of fraud in which charges have not yet been brought where former members of staff of Customs and Excise have been positively identified.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on investigations into cases of *(a)* fraud and *(b)* fraud by members of staff in Customs and Excise since 1990 in which all proceedings are complete. [1142]

Dawn Primarolo: The Department investigates a variety of different types of fraud under statute. Information on investigations into cases of fraud could only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

As far as fraud by members of staff is concerned, the figures that we have are as follows:

Reporting period	*Number of cases*
2004–05	10
2003–04	24
2002–03	17
2001–02	30
2000–01	33
1999–2000	53
1998–99	39
1997–98	35
1996–97	24
1995–96	38

Data Protection

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what instructions he has given to Inland Revenue offices on the application of the Data Protection (Processing of Sensitive Personal Data) (Elected Representatives) Order 2002 to communications to the Revenue from hon. Members on behalf of their constituents. [1533]

Dawn Primarolo: No specific instructions have been given HMRC offices as regards the application of the Data Protection (Processing of Sensitive Personal Data) (Elected Representatives) Order 2002.

Departmental Expenditure Limit (Wales)

Ian Lucas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the departmental expenditure limit for the *(a)* former Welsh Office and *(b)* National Assembly for Wales was in each year since 1997. [1281]

Mr. Des Browne: Data on Departmental Expenditure Limits, including the Welsh Assembly DEL, are published in the annual Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses. The latest data is in Table 1.11 of the 2005 edition of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (Cm 6521).

The Departmental Expenditure Limit for the Wales Office is contained within the Departmental Expenditure Limit of the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

EU Aid Provision

John Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much of the increased aid pledged by EU member states will be delivered *(a)* bilaterally, *(b)* via the EU, *(c)* via the World Bank, *(d)* via the UN AIDS Fund and *(e)* via other multilateral agencies; and if he will make a statement. [1725]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The EU member states made an historic commitment last month to double aid by 2010. Taking account of faster timetables towards the UN target of 0.7 per cent. ODA/GNI, EU aid will double from $40 billion in 2004 to $80 billion in 2010. It will be for individual member states to decide how the increased aid will be allocated.

EU Budget Rebate

Kate Hoey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the UK's gross contribution to the EU will be for the years 2004 to 2008 *(a)* including and *(b)* excluding the UK abatement. [1643]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The latest forecast of the UK's gross contributions, before and after abatement, for the period 2004–05 to 2007–08 are set out in the following table.

£ billion

	Gross contribution	*Gross contribution after abatement*
2004–05	12.1	8.4
2005–06	11.4	8.1
2006–07	13.5	9.4
2007–08	14.6	10.0

These estimates span the current Financial Perspective, which runs until 2006, and the beginning of the next Financial Perspective, which will set the EC Budget and policy framework for the period 2007 to 2013. Negotiations on the next Financial Perspective are ongoing and the above estimate for 2007–08 assumes an appropriately uprated roll forward of the status quo. It is without prejudice to the Government's assessment of the likely outcome of the ongoing negotiations on the next Financial Perspective.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate his Department has made of the net UK contribution to the EU budget in each of the next 10 financial years if the UK rebate *(a)* remains in its current form and *(b)* is frozen at the current level. [1900]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government's latest forecast of UK net contributions to the EC budget, which covers the period to 2007–08, was included in a footnote to Table C11 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report (HC 372, page 257) published on 15 March 2005. This forecast is used for public expenditure planning purposes and assumes an appropriately uprated roll forward of the status quo. The continuing inefficiencies and inequities on the expenditure side of the budget, and the resulting unfairness of the UK position, mean the abatement remains fully justified and is not up for negotiation.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Committee on mutual assistance in customs and agricultural matters, including operation of the CIS, (ii) Customs Code Committee—general customs rules and (iii) Customs Code Committee—recovery of claims met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [640]

Dawn Primarolo: All the following meetings were held in Brussels and were attended by an official of HM Customs and Excise.

(i) Italian presidency

7 July 2003

Irish presidency

27 February 2004

Dutch presidency

15 July 2004

(ii) Italian presidency

24 September 2003

Irish presidency

14 January 2004

5 February 2004

26 April 2004

24 May 2004

Dutch presidency

25 October 2004

(iii) Italian presidency

12 September 2003

7 October 2003

12 December 2003

Irish presidency

25 March 2004

6 May 2004

17 June 2004

Dutch presidency

7 September 2004

19 October 2004

EU Legislation

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what EU legislation was implemented by *(a)* the measure IR35 (National Insurance: Service Provision through Intermediaries) in October 1999, *(b)* the Tax Credits Act 1999 and Accompanying Regulations (Working Families Tax Credit), *(c)* the Aggregates Levy (General) Regulations 2002 and *(d)* the Child Trust Funds Act 2004. [1711]

Dawn Primarolo: No EU legislation was implemented as a result of any of these measures.

Fraud

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the level of identity fraud associated with the new tax credits; and if he will make a statement. [2076]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC are currently reviewing a random sample of finalised 2003–04 awards—the first year of working tax credit and child tax credit—to monitor the level of fraud and claimant error. However they will only be in a position to give an indication of the level of fraud or error later this year when that exercise has been completed.

To help prevent identity fraud HMRC:

Revise and refine their risk monitoring arrangements to respond effectively

Continually review their IT, business support and processes to identify any vulnerability to attacks

Review the weighting and effectiveness of their detailed risk rules to rapidly identify cases for proactive intervention by specialist teams, such as stopping payment, or commencing a criminal investigation.

A new criminal offence of tax credit fraud has also been introduced and HMRC have successfully prosecuted 260 tax credit cases since 2003.

In any instance where HMRC do discover that a genuine claimant's identity has been misused by others, it aims to remedy the situation as quickly as possible and minimise any distress caused by those unlawfully impersonating that individual.

Fuel Duty

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on levels of fuel duty and their impact on the competitiveness of UK road hauliers. [2120]

John Healey: The duty rate for ultra-low sulphur diesel is now 1.72 pence per litre less than it was in 2000. This equates to a duty rate reduction of around 12 per cent. in real terms since then.

We recognise the concern within the UK haulage industry about its competitiveness with overseas hauliers, and are therefore implementing our plans to introduce a lorry road-user charge, accompanied by offsetting tax cuts for hauliers who purchase duty-paid fuel in the UK.

Identity Cards

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what role he expects the civil registration service to play in the issuing of identity cards. [1607]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the Registrar General, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Brian Iddon, dated 6 June 2005:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the role of the civil registration service in the issuing of identity cards. (1607)

There are no plans to involve the civil registration service in the issue of identity cards.

Indebted Poor Countries

John Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether the UK will pay debt service to the International Monetary Fund on behalf of the world's poorest countries; and if he will make a statement; [1723]

(2) how he will prioritise cancellation of Iraq's debt and that of other heavily indebted poor countries; and if he will make a statement; [1724]

(3) what representations he has made to other G8 and Paris Club Nations to pay 10 per cent. of the debt service owed by highly indebted poor countries to the World Bank and African Development Bank; [2139]

(4) what representations he has made to the *(a)* International Monetary Fund, *(b)* World Bank and *(c)* regional development banks to cancel debt owed to them by the world's poorest countries and to revalue gold reserves to finance cancellation; and if he will make a statement. [2140]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK continues to be absolutely committed to the rapid and full implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative to ensure that it delivers maximum debt relief for the world's poorest countries.

Many bilateral donors have joined the UK in providing 100 per cent. relief. However, multilateral institutions only provide relief at around half this level. The Chancellor and Secretary of State for International Development announced in September 2004 that the UK would pay our share (10 per cent.) of 100 per cent. debt service relief on all World Bank and African Development Bank loans for all post-Completion Point HIPCs. This relief will also be extended to all low-income countries with sufficiently robust public expenditure management to ensure it helps towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Chancellor discussed this proposal at the G7 Finance Ministers in London in February, and in Washington in April, where the G7 agreed that further debt relief is needed, and to the principle of up to 100 per cent. multilateral debt relief. We are working with G7 countries, the IMF and World Bank to put this principle into action. Canada and the Netherlands have announced that they will join the UK in providing their share of multilateral debt relief. We continue to urge other countries to join us in providing additional multilateral debt relief.

Iraq is not eligible for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries' Initiative. The UK is in the process of reaching a bilateral agreement with Iraq to implement the terms of the debt relief package agreed between Paris Club creditors and representatives of Iraq on 21 November 2004; Paris Club creditors, including the UK, agreed to provide a total amount of debt reduction to Iraq of 80 per cent. in three phases.

For IMF debt, we believe the IMF's gold reserves are an under-utilised resource that could be used to finance further debt relief by the IMF. IMF analysis of debt relief and gold sales show that sales of the magnitude which would be required to finance the UK's proposal for debt relief could if properly phased be accommodated by gold markets without significant difficulty, and fall well within the bounds set by official sellers of gold in recent years.

Inheritance Tax Relief

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the relationship between the granting of inheritance tax relief on land and public access to that land. [1745]

Dawn Primarolo: Exemption from inheritance tax for heritage-quality land and buildings is conditional on the owner undertaking, among other matters, to provide reasonable public access. More details of the scheme, and of the properties and land to which the public have access, can be found at http://www.visitukheritage.gov.uk.

Other inheritance tax reliefs, for example that for agricultural property, are not dependent on public access.

Inland Revenue

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the *(a)* industrial, *(b)* commercial and *(c)* regional headings under which the Inland Revenue analyses and lists tax receipts. [1171]

Dawn Primarolo: Published analysis of the former Inland Revenue taxes are:

(a) Industrial and commercial

Income tax—Pay as you earn (PAYE) by standard industry codes.

Corporation tax by summary trade classification codes grouped into industrial sectors.

(b) Regional

Income tax by country, government office region, borough and district or unitary authority.

Stamp taxes-transactions on residential property by standard statistical region.

Child and Working tax credits by country, government office region, local authority and constituency.

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints have been made *(a)* directly and *(b)* through hon. Members in the last 12 months on how the Inland Revenue office in Preston deals with tax credit queries. [104]

Dawn Primarolo: It is not possible to say how many complaints have been made on how the Inland Revenue office in Preston deals with tax credit queries.

Life Expectancy

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of *(a)* male and *(b)* female life expectancy for people aged 65 years in (i) 2010, (ii) 2020, (iii) 2030, (iv) 2040, (v) 2050 and (vi) 2060. [2108]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The table gives projected period expectations of life at age 65 for men and women in the United Kingdom for the calendar years 2010, 2020, 2030, 2040, 2050 and 2060. 2003 is the latest year for which the data required to calculate actual period expectations of life are available. The figures are calculated using projected mortality rates taken from the latest, 2003-based, population projections for the United Kingdom.

The period expectation of life figures shown are based on the mortality rates projected by age and gender for the years stated and are the number of years people would be expected to live from age 65 if they experienced those mortality rates throughout their remaining lifetimes.

Period expectation of life for men and women at age 65 in the year shown

Based on projected data for year:	*Men*	*Women*
2010	17.8	20.4
2020	19.2	21.8
2030	20.0	22.7
2040	20.6	23.3
2050	21.1	23.8
2060	21.5	24.2

Lorry User Charging Levy

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will ensure that the Lorry User Charging Levy is not introduced into Northern Ireland in 2008. [1360]

John Healey: The Government are committed to ensuring that all lorries using UK roads contribute on a fair and equal basis towards the cost that they impose. The Government are therefore progressing their plans for a Lorry Road-User Charge (LRUC), which is due to be phased in from 2007–08, accompanied by offsetting tax cuts.

National Debt

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the national debt is. [2220]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Figures for public sector net debt in current prices are available on the Office for National Statistics website: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/tsdtables1.asp?vlnk=fsf

Table 1.1 A: Public Sector Finances (series RUTN and RUTO) shows figures for public sector net debt in £ billion and as a percentage of GDP.

National Insurance Database

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many live entries there are on the national insurance database; and what proportion of the entries he estimates are false. [1847]

Dawn Primarolo: The total number of National Insurance (NI) accounts on the National Insurance Recording system (NIRS2) is 73 million. Each year we process one billion transactions and changes to NI records.

We have no information on the proportion of the entries as being false.

HMRC has a number of well established processes in place to validate and review the accuracy of National Insurance records. Where incorrect use of a National Insurance Number, such as fraud, is identified, corrective action is taken.

Oil Prices

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what forward projections he has made of the price of a barrel of oil in the next 12 months. [1505]

John Healey: The oil price assumption underlying the public finance projections, audited by the NAO, is given in Box C1, page 246 of Budget 2005.

Electoral Statistics

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the electorate was in each parliamentary constituency in the UK in *(a)* May 1997, *(b)* June 2001 and *(c)* May 2005 (i) in total and (ii) broken down for each constituency, ranked according to the size of change in the electorate between 1997 and 2005, showing the ward with the greatest decrease in electorate at the head and the ward with the greatest increase at the bottom of each list. [168]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 6 June 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the electorate in each Parliamentary Constituency in the UK, in May 1997, June 2001 and May 2005. I am replying in his absence. (168)

Electoral statistics are produced annually. Since 2001 they have been collected with a reference date of 1 December, prior to this they were collected in February each year (and in 2001 there were two collections). Consequently, it is not possible to show data for the exact dates requested. Instead, data are shown for February 1997, February 2001, and December 2004. These are the closest available dates.

I am placing 12 tables in the House of Commons Library, containing the relevant information.

Parliamentary Constituencies

Table 1 shows the registered Parliamentary electorate for each Parliamentary Constituency in the UK for the above three dates. Constituencies are ranked by the change between 1997 and 2004. Table 2 shows the same data, but ranked by percentage change between 1997 and 2004.

For Scotland new Constituencies came into being for the 2005 general election. The data shown in Table 1 and 2 are for the 'old' Constituencies. These Constituencies were the same for each of the three years quoted. However, data are also available on the electorate of the 'new' Constituencies and these are shown in Table 3.

For Northern Ireland changes in the electoral arrangements in 2002 resulted in a sharp decline in the number of registered electors. These changes included the requirement to complete individual (rather than household) forms, the requirement to re-register every year, and the requirement to provide personal identification details. This will affect the 2004 figures and comparisons with previous years.

Electoral Wards

The number, structure, and boundaries of Wards have changed considerably between 1997 and 2004.

For England and Wales due to the number of Ward changes it is not possible to create a meaningful comparison between 1997 and 2004. It would only be possible to create comparisons between 1997 and 2001 or 2001 and 2004 at disproportionate cost. Table 4, 5, and 6 provide a full list of ward electorates in England for the three years. Table 7, 8, and 9 provide a full list of Ward electorates in Wales.

For Scotland Table 10 shows the change in Wards between 2001 and 2004. The Wards in 1997 were different and are shown in Table 11.

For Northern Ireland Table 12 shows the Ward electorates for all three years ranked by the change between 1997 and 2004. There were no boundary or structural changes over this period.

Population (North-east Lincolnshire)

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many primary school age children there are expected to be in north east Lincolnshire in each of the next five academic years. [2041]

John Healey: The Information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Shona McIsaac, dated 6 June 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the number of primary school age children there are predicted to be in North East Lincolnshire for the next five academic years. (2041)

Official 2003-based Subnational Population Projections for England were published by the Office for National Statistics in November 2004. Table 1 attached, shows the projected mid-year population of 5–11 year olds for North East Lincolnshire taken from these projections.

Table 1: North east Lincolnshire projected population of primary school age children[1]

	Thousand
2005	14.3
2006	14.0
2007	13.6
2008	13.3
2009	13.0
2010	12.9

[1] Primary school age defined as 5 to 11-year-olds.

Source:

ONS 2003-based Subnational population projections

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many live births there have been in north-east Lincolnshire in each of the past 10 years. [2042]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Shona McIsaac, dated 6 June 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your parliamentary Question concerning how many live births there have been in North East Lincolnshire in each of the past ten years. (2042)

The data given in the table for each of the ten years between 1994 and 2003, are for live births to mothers who were resident in North East Lincolnshire at the time of the birth.

Live births for North East Lincolnshire 1994–2003

	Number of live births
1994	2,116
1995	1,987
1996	1,953
1997	1,904
1998	1,854
1999	1,825
2000	1,735
2001	1,641
2002	1,669
2003	1,748

The figures for 1994–2002 were published in Key Population and Vital Statistics Series VS Nos. 21–29. Those for 2003 will appear in No 30, due to be published towards the end of this year

Rateable Values

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses in England had a rateable value for non-domestic rate purposes of *(a)* less than £3,000, *(b)* £3,000 to £3,999, *(c)* £4,000 to £4,999, *(d)* £5,000 to £5,999, *(e)* £6,000 to £6,999, *(f)* £7,000 to £7,999 and *(g)* £8,000 and above in each year since 1991; and what the yield from non-domestic rates was in each category in each year in (i) cash and (ii) real terms. [1196]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is given in the table.

	2000 Rating Lists					*2005 Rating List*
Range	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2005*
	Number of properties with RVs within the range					
Below £3,000	466,104	468,186	466,909	468,267	470,237	412,793
Between £3,000 and £3,999	144,154	144,289	143,219	143,364	143,203	129,316
Between £4,000 and £4,999	119,485	119,751	119,880	120,505	120,918	113,386
Between £5,000 and £5,999	97,726	98,008	98,573	99,101	99,439	98,388
Between £6,000 and £6,999	80,410	80,497	80,598	80,699	80,748	81,914
Between £7,000 and £7,999	66,774	67,014	67,088	67,326	67,344	68,196
8,000 and above	668,148	669,274	671,765	674,362	676,983	751,728
Totals	1,642,801	1,647,019	1,648,032	1,653,624	1,658,872	1,655,721

Red Diesel (Narrowboats)

Damian Green: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether changes are planned to the access for narrowboat owners to red diesel; and if he will make a statement. [1983]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to what I said on the Floor of the House on 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 865.

Self-financed Expenditure

Ian Lucas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what sums were reported to Her Majesty's Treasury for self-financed expenditure generated by *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England and *(c)* Wales in each year since 1997. [1279]

Mr. Des Browne: The data collected by Treasury on local authority spending are reported in Chapter 6 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (Cm 6521). Table 6.1 includes data on Local Authority Self Financed Expenditure.

Stamp Duty

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average stamp duty paid for a residential property purchase in *(a)* England and *(b)* the UK has been in each year since 1997. [1098]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Estimates of the average (mean) stamp duty bill paid for a residential property purchase in England and the UK in each financial year since 1997–98 can be found in the following table:

Average stamp duty bill for residential purchases

£

	England	*UK*
1997–98	600	570
1998–99	820	780
1999–2000	1,220	1,170
2000–01	1,570	1,480
2001–02	1,880	1,770
2002–03	2,260	2,160
2003–04	2,840	2,560

Tax Credits

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the backlog of work in the tax credit overpayment team is; how many staff are part of that team; and how many additional members have been added to the team in the last 12 months. [72]

Dawn Primarolo: In June 2004, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) set up a team to deal with disputed tax credit overpayments. At that time, there was the equivalent of around 105 full time staff working on the team. At 30 April 2005, this figure had increased to around 495.

At 30 April 2005 there were about 125,000 disputed overpayment cases awaiting a decision. HMRC have recently streamlined their procedures for dealing with disputed overpayments to enable them to deal with these cases more quickly.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the value of remitted tax credit overpayments was for financial year *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; [320]

(2) what estimate has been made of the administrative cost of assessing tax credit overpayment remittance claims in financial year *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [321]

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list *(a)* the value of overpaid tax credits since April 2003, *(b)* the amount written off due to official error and *(c)* the amount to be recovered; and what the timescale for recovery is. [1185]

Dawn Primarolo: Overpayments to a value of £51 million have been written off since tax credits were introduced. Of this around £37 million was written off following the identification of a software error that affected some 455,000 households in April and May 2003. The background to this is explained in the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General 2003–04, which can be found in the board's annual report at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/pdfs/report2004.pdf.

The remaining £14 million had been written off by the Tax Credit Office at 20 May 2005, following consideration of claims for official error in accordance with the Department's Code of Practice 26 "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?" which is available on its website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/cop26.pdf.

The estimated administrative cost of dealing with disputed overpayments was around £0.9 million in 2003–04 and around £7.6 million in 2004–05.

Statistics on overpayments in 2003–04, including information on their total value, appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Annual statistics 2003–04 payments" and can be found on the HM Revenue and Customs website at www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm.

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for each month since April 2003 the *(a)* number of tax credit awards made, *(b)* number of claims issued, broken down by parliamentary constituency, for overpayment recovery, *(c)* value of the credits issued, *(d)* amount of overpayments to be recovered, *(e)* number of letters received from hon. Members making representations on overpayments and *(f)* number of letters received from claimants subject to overpayment proceedings. [1167]

Dawn Primarolo: For *(a)*, quarterly estimates of the number of in-work families with tax credit awards (broken down by families with and without children) since July 2003 appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics." These can be found on the HM Revenue and Customs website at www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Information for *(b)* is not available in the format requested.

For *(c)*, the total expenditure on tax credits in 2003–04, I refer the right hon. Member to page 103 of the Inland Revenue annual report and accounts for that year. This can be found on HM Revenue and Customs website, at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/pdfs/report2004.pdf. Figures for 2004–05 will similarly be published later this year. Statistics for *(d)* appear in "Child and working tax credit annual statistics 2003–04 payments" and can be found on the HM Revenue and Customs website at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm.

Information for *(e)* and *(f)* is not held in the format requested. By end March 2005 about 214,000 households had requested that some or all of their overpayment be written off under HM Revenue and Customs' Code of Practice 26, What happens if we have paid you too much tax credits? These were received as follows:

	Number
April and May 2004	1,529
June	12,338
July	17,201
August	8,568
September	28,178
October	25,078
November	22,175
December	15,303
January 2005	18,512
February	23,728
March	41,781

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library all internal Inland Revenue audit recommendations relating to tax credits for the last four years. [1620]

Dawn Primarolo: No, to do so would prejudice the effective conduct of internal audit work in HM Revenue and Customs.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the efficiency of processing of tax credits claims in the past two months. [1623]

Dawn Primarolo: In the year 2004–05 the Inland Revenue had public service agreement targets for handling claims, changes of circumstances and renewals. The targets were to decide 55 per cent. of these within five working days and 95 per cent. within 30 working days, and to process with at least 90 per cent. accuracy. The Department will publish final results in its annual report, which will be available on its website at www.hmrc.gov.uk.

The results for April and May 2005 will be published in the 2005–06 annual report.

Tax Determinations

Damian Green: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax returns were threatened with determination by the Inland Revenue in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004. [1874]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of determinations issued in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004 are as shown in the table:

Financial year	*Determinations issued*
2002	148,661
2003	261,663
2004	245,206

The figures for determinations issued includes tax returns for all years up to the year shown.

UK Economic Forecasts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received from economic forecasting organisations concerning prospects for the UK economy over the next five years. [1992]

John Healey: The Treasury regularly surveys the economic forecasts produced by close to 40 independent economic forecasters. The results are published in "Forecasts for the UK Economy: A comparison of independent forecasts", which is available from www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

UK Households

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of UK households were headed by *(a)* couples and *(b)* married couples, in each year from 1979–80 to 2004–05; what the estimated figures are for 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [822]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. David Laws, dated 6 June 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about households in the United Kingdom (UK). I am replying in his absence. (822)

The attached table gives the proportion of households in the UK who were headed by couples and married couples for the three months ending May of each year from 1992 to 2004, the latest period for which information is available. Comparable information is not available for earlier years. These figures are taken from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

As with any statistical sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling variability. Comparable projections for 2005–06 for the UK are not available. However, projected figures for 2006 for England are available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. These show projections for 2006, based on 1996 data, of 54.2 per cent. of households headed by couples and 50.5 per cent. of households headed by married couples.

As the data from the Labour Force Survey and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are produced using separate sources, they are not directly comparable.

Proportion of UK households headed by couples and married couples United Kingdom, not seasonally adjusted

	Three month period ending May each year	
	All couples[1]	*Married couples*[2]
1992	62.0	56.7
1993	61.2	55.4
1994	60.4	54.5
1995	59.2	53.3
1996	58.4	52.6
1997	58.7	51.9
1998	58.3	51.4
1999	58.1	50.7
2000	58.2	50.5
2001	57.6	49.5
2002	57.2	48.9
2003	56.7	48.3
2004	56.7	48.2

[1] Couples in households as a percentage of all households in the UK.

[2] Married couples in households as a percentage of all households in the UK.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

UK Presidency (EU)

Kate Hoey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what communication activities are planned in relation to the policy areas covered by his Department during the UK Presidency of the EU; and what budget has been allocated for these activities. [1642]

John Healey: The external communications activity for the Presidency is being co-ordinated centrally by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Any EU Presidency media activities will be covered within the Treasury's existing budget and no additional funding will be allocated.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Regional Government Referendums

Mr. Davidson: To ask the hon. Member representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission (1) whether the Commission has reported to the Government on the conduct of the referendum on the north-east regional assembly; [1222]

(2) whether a Government response to the Commission's report on the conduct of the referendum on the north-east regional assembly is expected. [2054]

Peter Viggers: I have been asked to reply.

The Chairman of the Electoral Commission informs me that the Commission intends to publish the reports required by section 5 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 in relation to the administration of the referendum on the north-east regional assembly by autumn 2005. It will then be for the Government to respond as they consider appropriate.

CABINET OFFICE

Downing Street (Refurbishment)

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans there are to refurbish Numbers *(a)* 10 and *(b)* 11 Downing street; and if he will make a statement. [1309]

Mr. Hutton: There have been no major works on any of these buildings since 1963. Officials are considering options to bring services and accommodation within the Cabinet Office estate to a modern standard. Any proposals considered will be in line with the listed status of the buildings. No final decisions have been made.

EU Legislation

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list EU directives and regulations that the British Government is seeking *(a)* to repeal and *(b)* to amend in the pursuit of its policy of deregulation. [1899]

Mr. Hutton: As part of the '6-Presidency' initiative on better regulation in Europe, the UK Government have been working closely with other member states to bring forward proposals for simplification of EU law. A priority list of 15 measures was submitted to the Commission by the Competitiveness Council in November 2004. I have arranged for a copy to be placed in the Library today.

Regulatory reform will also be high priority for the UK Presidency of the EU in the second half of this year. The Government will be working closely with the Commission and other member states to ensure that the Commission delivers an effective package of further proposals for simplification of existing legislation—including repeal or amendment of legislation which is disproportionately burdensome for citizens and business—later in the year. As a first step, following its Communication "Better Regulation for Growth and Jobs" adopted on 16 March 2005, the Commission has asked member states for suggestions of which specific legislation would benefit most from simplification. Cabinet Office officials are currently consulting Government Departments, as well as external stakeholders, to identify suitable candidates which the UK will propose.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Animal Testing

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assistance his Department is giving to research bodies to encourage them to use scientific research techniques which do not involve animals for risk assessments on chemicals; and if he will make a statement. [674]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

Risk assessments on chemicals are carried out according to EU and UK regulatory requirements to provide the necessary data for the protection of human health and the environment. There is currently a legal requirement to use animals for some testing where there is no other method for producing the data. The Government are keen to keep animal testing to a minimum and supports the development of alternative methods which, once properly validated, may be accepted as part of the regulatory system. My Department is supporting the development of alternative methods and strategies that will lead to the reduced use of animals in chemical assessment programmes and is hosting a workshop on this topic in June.

The Government through the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) fund the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs). The Centre provides a UK focus for the development, promotion and implementation of the 3 Rs in biological and biomedical research in academia and industry.

Bankruptcies

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* personal and *(b)* company bankruptcies in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough there were in each of the last three years for which figures are available; what assessment he has made of recent trends; and if he will make a statement. [1564]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The following table records the numbers of individual bankruptcy orders and company compulsory liquidations in the London region classified according to Official Receivers' Office from 2002 to 2004.

Figures are not separately available for Greater London and each London borough.

Numbers of compulsory insolvencies recorded in the London Official Receivers offices, 2002–04[1]

	Annual totals		
	2002	*2003*	*2004*
Bankruptcy orders	1,457	1,933	4,246
Company Compulsory Liquidations	1,147	864	1,114

[1] The 2004 London figure includes Public Interest Unit (PIU) and Carousel, which together amount to 15 bankruptcies and 120 company compulsory liquidations

British Energy

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the occasions between 1 July 2004 and 31 March 2005 on which *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials met representatives from British Energy. [1485]

Malcolm Wicks: The then Minister for Energy, my hon. Friend the Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. O'Brien) met the Chief Executive of British Energy on 25 November 2004, and officials had very frequent contacts with British Energy in the period up to the successful completion of its restructuring on 14 January 2005. In future, officials will meet British Energy on a regular basis to discuss a range of issues affecting the company, and ministerial colleagues and I will meet British Energy as appropriate.

Climate Change

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what work the Department is undertaking in relation to climate change objectives in preparation for UK presidency of the G8 and EU. [65]

Malcolm Wicks: To provide a detailed answer at this stage would undermine our negotiations with other G8 countries. I can confirm, however, that DTI is working actively and closely with the Prime Minister's office, Defra, FCO, Treasury, DFID and other Departments in order to prepare for a successful summit at Gleneagles. DTI's contribution reflects the fact that energy policies are fundamentally important in tackling the causes of climate change: one of the two main themes for discussion. Defra and DTI also co-hosted the Energy and Environment Ministerial Roundtable in March which brought together energy and environment ministers or policy makers from 20 countries with significant energy needs; businesses, NGOs and international organisations such as the IEA also participated.

Departmental Name

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps were taken to put into effect the renaming of the Department as the Department for Productivity, Energy and Industry; and what the cost of those steps was. [107]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* The renaming exercise only reached preliminary stages. Replacement nameplates for the Department's London buildings were commissioned; a small number of publications and event literature were amended; websites were changed and departmental guidelines and stationery templates were adjusted and distributed. The total cost of these actions was £14,500.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost was of the recent departmental name change reversal. [62]

Alan Johnson: The total cost of reversing the name change back from DPEI to DTI was £15,400.

This is substantially less than the cost that would have been incurred by completing the implementation of the original name change.

Draft European Computer Implemented Inventions Directive

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from *(a)* representatives of industry and *(b)* others following the recent European Parliament report proposing changes to the draft European Computer Implemented Inventions Directive; and if he will make a statement. [1460]

Alun Michael: Since, the rapporteur Michel Rocard MEP's report on the 13 April, the Secretary of State and his predecessor, my right hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Ms Hewitt) have received two letters on the computer implemented inventions directive. One of these letters came from the Chartered Institute of Patent Agents and the other came from the right hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East and Wallsend, passing on the concerns of a constituent. Officials at the Patent Office have continued to engage with all interested parties, having recently completed a series of workshops on the concept of "technical contribution" within the directive. These workshops were attended by over 300 people, and a full report is available on the Patent Office website.

Energy Research

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much and what percentage of public expenditure on energy research and development for the financial year 2004–05 was planned to be spent on research and development for *(a)* nuclear fission, *(b)* nuclear fusion, *(c)* fossil fuel generation and *(d)* renewable energy sources. [171]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* The following table sets out the expenditure of the DTI and Research Councils on research and development for nuclear fission, fusion, fossil fuel generation and renewables between 1997–98 and 2004–05. The following figures are in £ million.

£ million

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
Nuclear fission	1.04	1.68	2.56	0.13	2.32	2.41	2.31	2.32
Nuclear fusion	16.6	12.6	14.3	17.0	14.4	14.6	15.63	19.53
Fossil fuel generation	3.43	3.0	2.61	4.85	5.52	4.35	6.25	8.13
Renewable energy[2]	13.7	15.0	14.39	15.46	18.82	24.40	29.07	25.16
Other[3]	1.73	1.87	2.00	2.07	2.27	2.65	1.97	4.86

[1] Estimated spend with some elements not included.

[2] Includes full range of renewables and also Research Council spend on carbon capture, energy storage and networks.

[3] Includes energy efficiency.

In addition further research relating to energy is included in the work of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research which has some £10 million funding from Research Councils over 2000–05, and in the work of the Carbon Trust. The UK also participates in international collaborative energy research via the EU and the International Energy Agency.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the (i) Advisory Committee for the transparency of measures governing the pricing of medicinal products for human use, (ii) Advisory Committee on standardisation in the field of information technology (Sogits) met and (iii) Standing Committee for the harmonisation of national legislation relating to recreational craft met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [554]

Alan Johnson: The information requested is as follows:

(i) The Advisory Committee for the transparency of measures governing the pricing of medicinal products for human use is under the specific responsibility of the Department of Health.

(ii) The Advisory Committee on standardisation in the field of information technology (Sogits) did not meet during the period in question.

(iii) It is my understanding that the hon. Member is referring to the Standing Committee set up under Article 6 of Directive 94/25/EC (as amended) on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of member states relating to recreational craft. The Standing Committee met in Brussels under the Irish Presidency on 5 May 2004. Two officials from the Department of Trade and Industry represented the United Kingdom. The UK contributed a number of points to the discussion on the production of guidance for industry and other stakeholders. No meetings were held during either the Italian or Dutch EU Presidency.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the (i) Standing Committee for the approximation of the laws of the member states relating to lifts, (ii) Standing Committee for the approximation of the laws of the member states concerning pressure equipment and (iii) Committee for the implementation of projects, actions and measures for the interoperability of trans-European networks for the interchange of data between administration (IDA) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [574]

Alan Johnson: The mandate for the lifts Standing Committee is contained in Article 6.3 of the Lifts Directive 95/16/EC. The Committee did not meet during the Italian Presidency. The first Committee meeting was held on 3 February 2004 in Luxembourg during the Irish Presidency and the second Committee met on

9 September 2004 in Luxembourg during the Dutch Presidency. An official from the Standards and Technical Regulations Directorate in my Department and a technical expert from the Health and Safety Executive attended both of the Committee meetings.

The mandate of the pressure equipment Standing Committee is contained in Article 7.2 of the Pressure Equipment Directive 97/23/EC. The provisions of this Article have not yet been put into effect, so the Committee has never met.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the (i) Committee on the Directives on names and labelling of textile products and (ii) Standing Committee on the harmonisation of national legislation on cableway installations designed to carry passengers met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [626]

Alan Johnson: The Committee on the Directives on names and labelling of textile products met only once during this period, on 30 January 2004 in Brussels. UK representation consists of one official from my Department.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Standing Committee on the approximation of the laws relating to construction products, (ii) Standing Committee on the approximation of the laws of the member states relating to machinery and (iii) Standing Committee on medicinal products for human use met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [631]

Alan Johnson: (ii) The mandate of the machinery Standing Committee is contained in Article 6.2 of the Machinery Directive 98/37/EC. The provisions of this Article were first put into effect in February 2005, i.e. during the Luxembourg presidency, and so the Standing Committee did not meet during the presidencies stated.

Exeter Airport

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will seek an urgent investigation by the Competition Commission of the proposed sale of Exeter airport by Devon county council. [1343]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) advises that consideration of this particular case is a matter for the European Commission under the EC Merger Regulation (ECMR). As a competent authority for the purposes of the ECMR, the OFT will retain an interest in the competition analysis of the proposed transaction.

Export Control

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will place the minutes of the Export Control Advisory Committee meetings since 13 May 2004 in the Library. [937]

Malcolm Wicks: No. To do so would inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation.

Freedom of Information Act

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many requests for information regarding the 1984–85 miners' strike under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 have been refused by his Department. [166]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* The Department has received one FOI request for information relating to the 1984–85 miners strike and the requester was referred to the National Archives as they hold all the Department's records relating to the strike.

MacNaughton Paper

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has established who leaked the paper arguing the case for nuclear energy, drafted by Joan MacNaughton and which appeared in the press at the time of his appointment; and if he will make a statement. [1522]

Malcolm Wicks: This leak has been subject to an internal investigation. Our policy is to neither publish nor comment on the outcome of leak investigations.

MG Rover

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when Ministers in his Department first informed the press that they were offering MG Rover (Phoenix Venture Holdings) a bridging loan of £100 million; and for what reasons this information was provided. [903]

Ian Pearson: On 1 April, in response to press speculation, the Department informed the press that if there were the prospect of a commercial deal being done, both MG Rover and SAIC were aware that the Government would consider the option of providing a bridging loan facility to that deal. If it were to be offered, any potential bridging loan facility would be provided under strict criteria to ensure the proper use of taxpayer's money and would of course be fully repayable.

No formal decision to offer a bridging loan to MG Rover was taken by the Department. This position was set out in the then Secretary of State's statement of 7 April.

Packaging Regulations

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage change in the amount of packaging used for food and drink products has followed the implementation of the packaging (essential requirements) regulations 2003. [1494]

Alun Michael: Packaging data collected in the UK do not show sector specific changes, instead they show material specific tonnage to enable the monitoring of performance against the targets set by the packaging and packaging waste directive 94/62/EC (as amended).

DEFRA's data note (as at July 2004) shows that since 1998, the estimated total tonnage of packaging flowing into the UK waste stream has dropped from 10.2 million tonnes to 10.1 million tonnes in 2003 (i.e. 0.98 per cent.) even though consumption of the packaged product has increased.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many prosecutions have been instigated under the packaging (essential requirements) regulations 2003; and what the results have been. [1495]

Alun Michael: To date, three successful prosecutions have been brought under the packaging (essential requirements) regulations. One company was fined a total of £600, another £250 and the most recent £2,000.

Power Stations

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list *(a)* the power stations operating in the UK and *(b)* the power stations that have been decommissioned since 2001. [1074]

Malcolm Wicks: A list of UK power stations can be found on the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/energy_stats/electricity/dukes5_11.xls

A list of generation disconnections can be found at table 3.7 of National Grid Transco's Seven Year Statement: http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/library/documents/sys_04/dddownloaddisplay.asp?sp=sys_Table3_7

Premium Rate Lines

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment he has made of the number of people affected by malpractices in the premium rate telephone information services industry. [1160]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 26 May 2005]*: In the first quarter of 2005 complaints received by the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) were down by a third compared to 2004 at 8,446 complaints. This represents a 33 per cent. reduction in the number of complaints compared to the first quarter of 2004, during which ICSTIS received 12,542 complaints. ICSTIS has taken a number of measures to inform consumers about premium rate services and numbers that appear on their telephone bills, and has increased its use of emergency procedures to close down services before they can cause extensive consumer harm.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the role of the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services in investigating malpractice in the telephone services industry. [1161]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 26 May 2005]*: The Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) regulates premium rate services via a code of practice approved by the Office of Communications (Ofcom). ICSTIS fines service providers for breaching its code of practice and disconnects services which cause consumer harm.

In the course of 2004, DTI asked Ofcom to review the regulation of premium rate services to ensure that the right level of protection is in place to protect consumers. Ofcom has now produced its report with recommendations designed to strengthen the enforcement powers and improve the effectiveness of the system of regulation. We are now working of ICSTIS to implement these recommendations as soon as possible.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what penalties are imposed on operators of premium rate lines who advertise the number without disclosing the cost per minute. [1245]

Alun Michael: The Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) has responsibility for the regulation and promotion of all Premium Rate Services (PRS). All PRS providers have to comply with ICSTIS's Code of Practice, which makes it a breach to advertise a number without disclosing the cost per minute. Those providers found to be in breach can be warned both informally and formally, shut down immediately using their Emergency Procedure, barred from operating and fined up to £100,000.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services has taken against the operators of premium rate phone line 09050099178; and who the operator of this line is. [1248]

Alun Michael: The Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) raised a number of breaches of its Code of Practice after receiving 43 complaints about companies operating within the 0905 009 9000–9199 number range. Consequently, on 25 May 2005 ICSTIS invoked its Emergency Procedure. As a result all services operating on this number range have been shut down until a full investigation has been conducted and an adjudication made. Should ICSTIS find the provider to have breached its Code of Practice, the provider can also be barred from operating and fined up to £100,000. Details of the operator of the line can be obtained from ICSTIS and details of their adjudication will appear on their website in due course.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on procedures for investigation of malpractice in the premium rate telephone information services industry. [1157]

Alun Michael: The Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) regulates premium rate services (PRS) via a code of practice approved by the electronic communications regulator the Office of Communications (Ofcom). ICSTIS has both a standard procedure, and a fast-track emergency procedure which can be used to disconnect a fraudulent PRS service in as little as two hours.

In the course of 2004 DTI asked Ofcom to review the regulation of PRS to ensure that the right level of protection is in place to protect consumers. Ofcom has now produced its report with recommendations designed to strengthen ICSTIS' enforcement procedures and improve its effectiveness. We are now working hard to implement all these recommendations as soon as possible.

Supermarkets

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will establish an independent inspector within the Office of Fair Trading to regulate the relationship between supermarkets and suppliers; [1496]

(2) what steps he intends to take to ensure that the relationship between agricultural suppliers and supermarkets does not give undue power to the latter. [1497]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Prime responsibility for operating the UK competition regime rests with the independent competition authorities. In the specific case of supermarkets it is the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), which is currently responsible for keeping under review the code of practice governing supermarket's relations with their suppliers. It would be for the OFT to consider whether any action would be justified in respect of the grocery market.

The OFT have been seeking views on competition issues in this sector, including the code of practice. They are considering the responses and will publish their findings in due course.

WEEE Directive

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* complexities and *(b)* public accountability implications are that make the National Clearing House model for the implementation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive difficult to implement. [1346]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government announced on 24 March a modified approach to the concept of a National Clearing House (NCH) for the initial phase of the UK's implementation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (the WEEE Directive). This modified approach builds on the very useful work done previously on the NCH concept by some producers. The Government have made clear that if, after the EU review of the Directive in 2008, producers want to implement a different NCH model, then it would be for them to take this forward.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's policy is on the use of antisocial behaviour orders against individuals taking part in political demonstrations. [731]

Hazel Blears: The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the conditions that must be met before an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) can be made. The Act stipulates that to make an ASBO courts must be satisfied that a person has acted in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself and that an order is necessary to protect the community from further antisocial behaviour. An ASBO can only be made by the court if these specific conditions have been met.

Individuals have the right to demonstrate their views provided they do so within the law and without causing intimidation and distress to others.

Asylum and Immigration

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which local authorities have provided housing for people who have been granted refugee status since 1 May 2004; and how many such people were housed by each local authority. [665]

Yvette Cooper: Information collected centrally by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister about general lettings of local authority housing stock does not distinguish specific groups or characteristics of households.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Government's policy is on issuing food vouchers to asylum seekers. [755]

Mr. McNulty: Asylum seekers are not issued with food vouchers. Unsuccessful asylum seekers provided with support under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 may be provided with vouchers to enable them to obtain food if they are not housed in full board accommodation.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to ensure that asylum claimants who are unrepresented at interviews are informed of their right to request that the interview is tape recorded. [1529]

Mr. McNulty: We have put facilities in place since the date of the Court of Appeal judgment in the case of Dirshe to enable eligible claimants who request it to have their substantive asylum interview tape recorded. To minimise occasions where a request to have an interview tape recorded may not have reached us in time, we have put a procedure in place to ask the claimant on arrival in the Interview Booking Unit whether, if eligible, they would like their asylum interview to be tape recorded. From 26 May, all claimants will be advised of their rights regarding tape recording in the letter inviting them to interview. Once the guidance to interviewing officers has been finalised, this, together with a copy of the invitation to interview letter, will be published on the Immigration Nationality Directorate's website.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department under what circumstances asylum seekers have been given permission to work since 2000; and whether those with medical or nursing skills have been favoured when applications by asylum seekers to work in the UK have been answered. [2150]

Mr. McNulty: Between 1 January 2000 and 2 April 2000 asylum seekers could seek permission to work if their application remained outstanding for longer than six months without a decision being made on it. During this period any asylum seeker, irrespective of the time taken to reach an initial negative decision on their claim, could seek permission to work if they were appealing against the decision to refuse them asylum. The employment concession for asylum seekers was amended with effect from 3 April 2000 to restrict permission to work to those asylum seekers whose application for asylum remained outstanding for longer than six months without a decision being made on it. Those appealing against a decision to refuse them asylum were no longer able to seek permission to work. The concession under which asylum seekers could seek permission to work was withdrawn on 23 July 2002 but it remained possible for asylum seekers to be given permission to take employment in exceptional circumstances. Since 6 February 2005, following the introduction of the EU Directive on Reception Standards for Asylum Seekers, asylum seekers may seek permission to work if their claim remains outstanding for longer than 12 months without a decision being made on it and providing the reason for the delay cannot be attributable to the asylum seeker. The skills or qualifications held by asylum seekers are not taken into account when deciding whether permission to work should be granted.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the date of application is of the earliest application for Indefinite Leave to Remain of a failed asylum seeker who was granted Exceptional Leave to Remain which is awaiting a decision by his Department. [55]

Mr. McNulty: The date of application of the earliest application for Indefinite Leave to Remain if a failed asylum seeker was granted Exceptional Leave to Remain and is awaiting a decision is 25 March 2003.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* immigration officers and *(b)* senior immigration officers (i) are in post and (ii) represent a full complement at (A) each terminal at Heathrow, (B) at each terminal at Gatwick, (C) Stansted and (D) Luton airport. [333]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the following table:

	Target	*Staff in post 30 April 2005*
Heathrow Terminal 1		
HMI/CIO	38.2	34.2
IO	176.3	166.0
Heathrow Terminal 2		
HMI/CIO	30	33.9
IO	132.7	124.0

	Target	Staff in post 30 April 2005
Heathrow Terminal 3		
HMI/CIO	65.4	48.2
IO	326.0	244.2
Heathrow Terminal 4		
HMI/CIO	38	32.1
IO	175.0	154.1
Gatwick		
HMI/CIO	75.8	76
IO	316.2	281.6
Stansted		
HMI/CIO	23	22.2
IO	94.4	101.2
Luton		
HMI/CIO	6	2.4
IO	29.0	25.4

A number of recruitment campaigns and associated training courses are taking place throughout the year to bring staff numbers up to target levels.

"Senior immigration officer" has been taken to include chief immigration officer and immigration inspector.

These figures are based on locally collated management information, which may be subject to change and were correct at 30 April 2005. It is not possible to split the Gatwick figure between the two terminals.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has conducted on how many economic migrants will be required over each of the next five years to meet demand for workers in *(a)* the private and *(b)* the public sector; and what estimate he has made of the number of such migrants who will be required in each case. [1578]

Mr. McNulty: In a flexible and dynamic labour market such as that of the UK, it is impractical to make forecasts of this nature. As set out in the Home Office Five Year Strategy for Asylum and Immigration, the Government encourages migration for work through a flexible points based system that is employer-led and responsive to market needs, rather than a rigid and arbitrary quota.

BB Guns

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what recent assessment he has made of the dangers posed by BB guns; [34]

(2) what action he has taken to curb the threat posed by BB guns; [35]

(3) what action he is planning to take to reduce the threat posed by BB guns. [36]

Hazel Blears: We are looking very closely at the whole issue of controlling imitation firearms, including air soft guns (commonly referred to as "BB" guns).

There is already a range of controls to tackle the misuse of these guns which cause real nuisance and can result in the deployment of armed police. To help combat the problem, the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 created a new offence of having an imitation firearm in a public place without reasonable excuse. This means that anybody seen in public with an airsoft gun can be challenged and, if unable to give a satisfactory explanation for having it, arrested. It is also a serious offence to threaten other people with imitation firearms.

We have made it clear that we will not tolerate the use of imitation firearms to threaten and intimidate others and we will be proposing tougher laws on the sale and manufacture of all imitation firearms and tougher penalties for misuse in the proposed Violent Crime Reduction Bill.

Community Support Officers

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* conditions of service and *(b)* average salary of community support officers are. [396]

Hazel Blears: Police staff, including community support officers, are employed by police authorities and their terms and conditions of service are determined by each authority.

The interim report of the National Evaluation of Community Support Officers (CSOs) published in December 2004 (available at www.policereform.gov.uk) found that, of the forces surveyed, the minimum pay point, excluding allowances, for CSOs ranged nationally from £14,094 and £19,626 and the maximum ranged from £15,408 to £25,356.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers of arrest community support officers have. [397]

Hazel Blears: Community support officers do not have a power of arrest.

Crime and Policing (Hammersmith and Fulham)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on levels of *(a)* violent crime, *(b)* car crime, *(c)* robbery and *(d)* burglary in Hammersmith and Fulham constituency. [824]

Hazel Blears: In 2003–04 in Hammersmith and Fulham the police recorded 1,146 robberies (down 10 per cent. from 2002–03), 2,074 burglary dwelling offences (down 5 per cent), 4,478 thefts of or from vehicles (down 20 per cent.), and 4,287 violence against the person offences (down 1 per cent.).

The Government have established a number of targeted measures to continue to tackle crime in Hammersmith and Fulham. The area has been part of the Government's successful Street Crime Initiative, and has benefited from intensive national work to reduce vehicle crime and burglary and more recently to tackle violent crime through our alcohol harm reduction strategy and our work to tackle gun crime.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers are operational in Hammersmith and Fulham constituency. [825]

Hazel Blears: On 31 March 2005 the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham had 32.6 full-time equivalent community support officers (CSOs). There are currently 2,143 CSOs in the Metropolitan Police Service (MRS). The deployment of CSOs within the MRS is a matter for the Commissioner.

There were over 6,300 CSOs in England and Wales at the end of March 2005. We are making significant additional resources available through the neighbourhood policing fund to help forces increase CSO numbers to 24,000 by 2008.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many dispersal orders have been issued in the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham during the past 12 months. [850]

Hazel Blears: The Commissioner of Police of the metropolis tells me that, in the last 12 months, three areas in the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham were designated under section 30 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. In these areas, 82 people were given a direction to disperse.

Drugs Classification

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the classification of cannabis under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. [1368]

Paul Goggins: Cannabis was reclassified from Class B to C on 29 January 2004. In March of this year, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary asked the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs to consider all the relevant evidence from recent studies into the links and associations between cannabis and developing mental health problems. The Home Secretary also asked for advice on the claims of greater prevalence of increased strength cannabis. He wants to be clear whether the evidence would alter the Council's overall assessment of the appropriate classification of cannabis. The Advisory Council intends to complete this review by the end of the year. The Government will consider the Council's recommendations carefully before making any decision about the classification of the drug.

Graffiti

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to change the legislation relating to graffiti in public places. [129]

Hazel Blears: There are a number of powers available to tackle graffiti in a public place, ranging from a Penalty Notice for Disorder for a minor offence of graffiti, up to a £5,000 fine under the Criminal Damage Act 1971. The police also have the power to stop and search someone suspected of causing criminal damage. The Home Office is currently reviewing the Graffiti Removal Notice power introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. This power is currently available to 12 local authorities on a pilot basis. Following the review of the pilot a decision will be made on whether these powers will be rolled out nationwide. The Home Office also reviewed the legislation in preparation for the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. This strengthened existing legislation regarding the under-age sale of aerosol paints. The Home Office will keep graffiti legislation under review.

Hertfordshire Police

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he is taking to assist Hertfordshire Constabulary in retaining experienced police officers with more than three years' service; and if he will make a statement. [773]

Hazel Blears: Measures to assist retention in Hertfordshire include the Special Priority Payment Scheme, which gives forces flexibility to target payments at officers in demanding roles, those with higher responsibility than normal for the rank, and where particular recruitment or retention difficulties exist. All officers who joined on or after 1 September 1994 and are not in receipt of a housing allowance are entitled to the south east allowance of £2,000 per annum.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of the research on the costs and benefits of the Identity Cards scheme, referred to in his oral answer of 23 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 412. [1267]

Mr. McNulty: We have published our current best estimates of the average annual operating costs of issuing biometric passports and ID cards to UK nationals and operating identity verification services in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) on the 25 May. The RIA also discusses the areas where the scheme will provide benefits to public and private sector organisations as well as to citizens.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what administrative fee an individual will be charged in order to receive an identity card under proposals to introduce a national identity card system. [1613]

Mr. McNulty: The latest cost estimates are contained within the Regulatory Impact Assessment which was published alongside the Identity Cards Bill on 25 May 2005. The current best estimate for the Unit cost of a 10-year adult passport/ID Card package for UK citizens is £93. The costs of producing the passport/ID card are however, different from fees that would be charged for the passport/ID card. Clause 37 of the Identity Cards Bill gives the power for Parliament to approve fees for the ID Cards Scheme. The actual amount charged to a person will depend on future policy decisions on charging within the scope allowed by the Bill.

Mark Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his latest estimate is of the amount individuals will be charged to acquire an identity card. [1205]

Mr. McNulty: The latest cost estimates are contained within the Regulatory Impact Assessment published with the Identity Cards Bill on 25 May 2005. The current best estimate of the unit cost of an adult passport/ID card package for UK Citizens valid for 10 years is £93 at 2005–06 prices. Clause 37 of the Identity Cards Bill gives the power for Parliament to approve fees for the ID

Cards Scheme. The actual amount charged to a person will depend on future policy decisions on charging within the scope allowed by the Bill.

Mark Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his latest estimate is of the cost of the identity card database. [1206]

Mr. McNulty: The latest cost estimates are contained within the Regulatory Impact Assessment which was published alongside the Identity Cards Bill on 25 May 2005. The current best estimate of the total average annual running costs for issuing biometric passports and ID cards to UK nationals, and running a verification service is £584 million at 2005–06 prices. This cost includes operating and maintaining the identity card database.

Mark Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what his latest estimate is of the annual running costs of the identity card scheme; [1204]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the cost of introducing the identity card scheme. [1207]

Mr. McNulty: The latest cost estimates are contained within the Regulatory Impact Assessment which was published alongside the Identity Cards Bill on 25 May 2005. The current best estimate for the total average annual running costs for issuing biometric passports and ID cards to UK nationals, and running a verification service is £584 million at 2005–06 prices. Around 70 per cent. of these costs would be incurred in issuing biometric passports alone.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost of the additional central IT infrastructure for providing online verification of identity for user organisations; and what methodology was used to calculate the cost. [1785]

Mr. McNulty: The Regulatory Impact Assessment published alongside the Identity Cards Bill on 25 May 2005 contains the latest cost estimates. The current best estimate for the total average annual running costs for issuing passports and ID Cards to UK nationals is estimated at £584 million. The cost of operating and maintaining those parts of the central IT infrastructure which will support identity verification services is included within this figure, however the costs have not been disaggregated. The costs were calculated in accordance with Government accounting guidelines and Office of Government Commerce best practice.

Illegal Cycling

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will seek to increase *(a)* police and *(b)* council powers to confiscate off-road bicycles and quad bikes that are ridden illegally on private land, common land or public roads; and if he will make a statement. [1575]

Paul Goggins: The police already have a power to seize any vehicle which is being driven off-road without authority or on-road carelessly or inconsiderately, if it is at the same time causing alarm, distress or annoyance. Local authorities have powers, including a seizure power, to deal with noise nuisance from off-road vehicles We are satisfied these powers are sufficient and have no plans to increase them.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will seek to strengthen the law relating to preventing off-road bicycles and quad bikes ridden illegally on private land, common land or public roads. [1576]

Paul Goggins: The Government has recently consulted on changes to road traffic legislation in the Review of Road Traffic Offences involving Bad Driving which was published on 3 February and ended on 6 May 2005. The proposals would apply to all motorised vehicles driven on public roads, including quad bikes. In addition the consultation paper asks whether the offence of "wanton and furious driving" which is the only offence that applies to non-motorised vehicles and private land, be replaced by a modern provision. We have had a large number of responses to the consultation. We are now in the process of carefully analysing all the responses received and we will publish a summary in due course.

Adventure Capital Fund

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how much of the Intervention Capital Fund was allocated to social enterprises in each year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement; [762]

(2) what criteria are used in allocating funding from the Intervention Capital Fund; and if he will make a statement. [763]

Paul Goggins: I understand my hon. Friend is referring to the Adventure Capital Fund, for which a second investment window opens in July. Only Community Enterprises can apply. For Round Two funding they must be engaged in activities covering children and young people; crime reduction; drug prevention; employment initiatives; community care and mental health; or vocational training. They also need to focus on building strong, independent community-based organisations; capacity building; disadvantaged groups; building social capital; or provision of community-based services.

The Adventure Capital Fund has provided funds (in the form of investments and also grants to help organisations become investment ready) to social enterprises with a community focus as follows:

	£
	Amount
2002–03	
Main investments	2,000,000
Bursary grants	271,240
Total	2,271,240
2003–04	
Main investments	2,126,640
Business development grants	151,000
Total	2,277,640

	£
	Amount
2004–05	
Main investments	1,580,000
Business development grants	150,168
Total	1,730,168

Police Force

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables have been recruited in each of the last three years. [79]

Hazel Blears: Figures showing the numbers joining the special constabulary are given in annual statistical bulletins on police service strength, which are available in the Library.

The numbers of special constables joining in the last three years for which figures have been published are given in the table. Joiners include those transferring between forces.

	Numbers joining the special constabulary in England and Wales
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	2,224
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	1,885
1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002	1,714

Source:
Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate Police Strength Bulletins.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to change the criteria for *(a)* entry to the police force and *(b)* training police officers. [128]

Hazel Blears: The entry requirements for police officers were reviewed in 2003 as part of the strategy to develop National Recruitment Standards. These standards now include a national recruitment and assessment process, and standards covering fitness, medical conditions, eyesight and eligibility criteria. These arrangements are kept under review. Effective training to improve operational performance is central to the Government's agenda on police reform and is continually reviewed and developed as part of the drive towards workforce modernisation. The Police Training and Development Board is responsible for this review and development and sets the priorities for new national learning and development programmes. Among others, this board includes representatives from the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of Police Authorities, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Skills for Justice and the Central Police Training and Development Agency (Centrex).

Taser Guns

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to equip frontline officers with Taser stun guns. [564]

Hazel Blears: The current operational use of Taser is limited to use by trained firearms officers, as a less lethal alternative for use in situations where authority to use firearms has been granted. I have no plans for this equipment to be made available to all frontline police officers at the present time.

Police Vehicles

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers in the *(a)* Kent police force and *(b)* England hold (i) advanced police driving licences and (ii) patrol car licences. [98]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 20 May 2005]:* Information is not collected centrally on the number of police officers with advanced police driving licenses or patrol car licences.

Police/Crime Statistics

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he is taking to reduce crime in Hertfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [840]

Hazel Blears: The Secretary of State has established a comprehensive programme of measures to tackle crime in Hertfordshire, as elsewhere in England and Wales.

The 10 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in Hertfordshire are responsible for the delivery of crime reduction at the local level. The performance of the CDRPs is managed by the Home Office team in the Government office for the east of England, whose role is to support and challenge the partnerships in their region. The director of this team is held accountable by the Crime Reduction Director in the Home Office through quarterly bilateral meetings, supplemented by performance review meetings with Home Office performance support managers in the intervening months.

To ensure that the Home Office meets its Public Service Agreement one, 'to reduce crime by 15 per cent., and more in high crime areas, by 2007–08', the Government offices in the regions have negotiated crime reduction targets with all their partnerships. The aggregate target reduction across Hertfordshire is just over 15 per cent. to be measured by the British Crime Survey (BCS) Comparator using a baseline of 2003–04. The BCS Comparator is a subset of all recorded crime that relates closely to the questions in the BCS.

All the Hertfordshire partnerships have planned their crime reduction activity for their three-year strategies, which they are implementing from April 2005. The Government office for the east of England will have monitored the contents of these strategies to ensure that they address crimes of both local and national concern.

The Secretary of State has also initiated a number of national programmes to support the work undertaken at local level.

> Prolific and Priority Offenders—partnerships are required to identify the most prolific offenders in their area and focus their activity on them through three strands, prevent and deter, catch and convict, and rehabilitate and resettle. There are three prolific offender schemes running in Hertfordshire: North Hertfordshire, Watford and Hertsmere. In all 206 prolific offenders have been identified in Hertfordshire.
>
> The intensive elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme (DIP)—drug testing of offenders charged with a range of "trigger offences"—is a way of identifying drug users at an early

stage of their contact with the criminal justice system. Key elements of DIP—the throughcare and aftercare parts of the programme—are delivered in all areas of England and Wales.

Both the Acquisitive Crime Team and the Violent Crime Unit in the Home Office are developing policy that can be implemented at local level to support crime reduction activity. They also undertake research, disseminate publicity and good practice in their subject areas, and visit partnerships with particular needs .

The Police Standards Unit (PSU) in the Home Office regularly monitors the performance of police forces and, within them, basic command units, and engages with forces who are underperforming on a range of indicators. Forces' performance against their peers is an important aspect of the assessment. PSU have not been engaged with Hertfordshire police.

Hertfordshire constabulary had 2,135 police officers on 30 September 2004, 213 more than in March 2001. The Crime Fighting Fund has funded 113 extra officers in the force since April 2000, over and above the force's own recruitment plans. At the end of March Hertfordshire constabulary had 99 community support officers, supplementing the work of the force in providing reassurance to communities.

The Home Office has made available to all police forces and CDRPs a statistical database, iQuanta, that enables them to monitor their crime reduction performance. Through the crime reduction website CDRPs are able to access 'toolkits' and examples of good practice to help them with planning crime reduction activity.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidences of violent crime there have been in Wales in each year since 2002. [1069]

Hazel Blears: There were 56,561 offences of violent crime recorded in Wales in 2002–03 and 56,415 recorded in 2003–04.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidences of drug-related crime there have been in Wales in each year since 2002. [1070]

Paul Goggins: Recorded crime figures are used to measure the extent of crime in local areas. Although these include statistics on drugs offences—such as possession—and on property crimes—such as burglary—they do not contain information on the offender's drug habits. It is therefore not possible to estimate from these statistics the numbers of crimes in Wales that are drug-related.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long the Tetra telecommunications mast in Haverfordwest will remain in its temporary location on top of Haverfordwest police station. [482]

Hazel Blears: The siting of Airwave masts is a matter for O2 Airwave, the network provider.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued concerning the siting of Tetra communications masts in the vicinity of *(a)* special schools and *(b)* schools. [484]

Hazel Blears: None. There is no reason to treat Airwave masts any differently to any other mobile telecommunications masts. Airwave masts are subject to planning regulations, which are the responsibility of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Ticket Touts

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has played a role in drawing up arrangements to prevent ticket touts re-selling match tickets at inflated values *(a)* at cricket matches between England and Australia in 2005 and *(b)* at sports fixtures generally. [687]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 24 May 2005]:* Home Office interest in ticket touting is limited to section 166 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 which prohibits ticket touting in respect of regulated football matches. This is a public order provision which explicitly applies to football in view of the importance of segregation in reducing the potential for disorder between rival fans. The provision has not been extended to cover other sports as there is no comparable public order threat.

Traffic Wardens

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are taken to ensure that adequate numbers of traffic wardens are recruited in Leicestershire. [2015]

Paul Goggins: This is a local operational matter. Traffic wardens are employed by police authorities and act under the directions of the chief officer of police. Their role in enforcing parking restrictions is being reduced as decriminalised parking enforcement is becoming more widespread. Community Support Officers and accredited persons can also exercise certain traffic related powers and these are being extended by the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005. The recruitment of parking attendants to enforce civil parking infringements is a matter for the local authority.

Watch Schemes

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* Neighbourhood Watch, *(b)* Shop Watch, *(c)* Pub Watch, *(d)* Farm Watch and *(e)* Rural Watch; and what plans he has to improve co-ordination between such Watch schemes. [78]

Hazel Blears: It is difficult to determine exactly the impact of Neighbourhood Watch (and other Watch activity) on reducing crime in isolation from other factors. The 2000 British Crime Survey found that 75 per cent. of respondents thought that Neighbourhood Watch schemes were effective in preventing crimes such as burglary. The information was published in 2001 as part of Home Office Research Findings 150. The Home Office has not made a separate assessment of the effectiveness of Shop Watch, Pub Watch, Farm Watch, Rural Watch or other "Watch" schemes. Following a research and public consultation exercise in 2004, the Home Office is in the process of setting up a new national forum organisation which will act as an umbrella body for the Watch movement as a whole. The new organisation will be a registered charity and independent of Government. It will aim to share good practice within and between different Watch organisations and help to improve co-ordination between them.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Alcohol Education

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are taken in schools to educate children about alcohol. [1297]

Jacqui Smith: All schools must teach about alcohol as part of the science curriculum. Schools are also expected to use the non-statutory framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) to deliver drug, alcohol and tobacco education. At Key Stages 3 the framework states that pupils should learn basic laws and facts about alcohol and at Key Stage 4, they should learn about the health risks of alcohol.

The Department is supporting schools by offering a toolkit to support professionals deliver drug and alcohol education. Since April 2004, we have supported 3,000 teachers to complete the PSHE certificate which sets standards in the teaching of drug and alcohol education.

A-level Grades

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of students obtaining three or more A grades at A-level were from *(a)* grammar schools, *(b)* state schools and *(c)* independent schools in each of the last 10 years; and what proportion of students obtaining such grades in (i) mathematics, (ii) foreign languages and (iii) sciences were from each kind of school in each year. [1738]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on the proportion of students obtaining three or more A grades at A-level by school type is in the following table.

16 to 18-year-old candidates achieving at least three A grades at A-level—1995 to 2004

	1995	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
3 A grades in mathematics					
Number of students achieving	20	47	50	23	32
Percentage in comprehensive	0.0	8.5	8.0	4.3	0.0
in grammar	20.0	14.9	12.0	17.4	15.6
in independent	80.0	74.5	68.0	69.6	71.9
in FE sector	0.0	2.1	12.0	8.7	12.5
3 A grades in languages					
Number of students achieving	17	19	19	31	16
Percentage in comprehensive	11.8	13.3	10.5	19.4	12.5
in grammar	11.8	0.0	15.8	9.7	25.0
in independent	41.2	40.0	26.3	38.7	31.3
in FE sector	35.3	46.7	47.4	32.3	31.3
3 A grades in sciences					
Number of students achieving	611	621	729	802	900
Percentage in comprehensive	19.1	19.3	22.2	17.6	21.0
in grammar	14.2	138	15.5	15.6	18.7
in independent	55.8	53.3	48.4	52.0	46.8
in FE sector	10.8	13.5	13.9	14.8	13.6
3 A grades in any subjects					
Number of students achieving	12,698	13,305	14,065	15,874	16,550
Percentage in comprehensive	28.1	28.6	28.4	28.6	29.0
in grammar	12.9	12.7	13.4	14.0	14.7
in independent	41.0	40.3	40.4	39.0	38.4
in FE sector	18.0	18.4	17.8	18.4	17.9
3 A grades in languages, mathematics and sciences					
Number of students achieving	5,062	5,218	5,518	6,300	6,371
Percentage in comprehensive	26.3	25.7	26.4	26.3	27.6
in grammar	13.4	13.1	13.3	14.1	15.0
in independent	45.1	46.0	45.0	44.3	43.2
in FE sector	15.3	15.2	15.3	15.3	14.2
3 A grades in sciences and mathematics					
Number of students achieving	4,664	4,732	5,015	5,756	5,828
Percentage in comprehensive	26.4	25.5	26.7	26.3	27.8
in grammar	13.1	13.1	13.2	14.1	15.0
in independent	45.2	46.3	44.9	44.3	42.9
in FE sector	15.3	15.1	15.2	15.2	14.3

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
3 A grades in mathematics					
Number of students achieving	33	29	39	51	50
Percentage in comprehensive	6.1	3.4	10.3	0.0	0.0
in grammar	12.1	3.4	17.9	7.8	10.0
in independent	75.8	79.3	69.2	86.3	88.0
in FE sector	6.1	13.8	2.6	5.9	2.0
3 A grades in languages					
Number of students achieving	20	16	28	45	34
Percentage in comprehensive	10.0	6.3	10.7	11.1	8.8
in grammar	10.0	6.3	17.9	2.2	2.9
in independent	65.0	43.8	46.4	55.6	73.5
in FE sector	15.0	43.8	25.0	31.1	14.7
3 A grades in sciences					
Number of students achieving	887	881	1,274	1,168	1,192
Percentage in comprehensive	234	21.7	23.0	22.2	25.3
in grammar	17.1	18.6	19.2	19.4	17.6
in independent	45.4	46.5	43.5	46.1	45.0
in FE sector	14.0	13.2	14.4	12.2	12.1
3 A grades in any subjects					
Number of students achieving	17,014	17,900	20,443	22,365	23,953
Percentage in comprehensive	29.2	28.6	28.5	28.2	27.5
in grammar	14.9	15.9	16.6	15.7	16.4
in independent	38.2	37.3	37.5	37.7	37.7
in FE sector	17.7	18.3	17.5	18.4	18.4
3 A grades in languages, mathematics and sciences					
Number of students achieving	6,201	6,309	6,991	6,963	7,368
Percentage in comprehensive	26.9	27.2	25.8	25.6	24.6
in grammar	15.3	16.1	17.9	16.5	17.1
in independent	42.7	42.4	41.8	43.4	43.4
in FE sector	15.1	14.3	14.5	14.5	14.8
3 A grades in sciences and mathematics					
Number of students achieving	5,657	5,695	6,236	6,161	6,556
Percentage in comprehensive	27.3	27.7	26.5	26.1	25.2
in grammar	15.1	15.9	18.1	16.9	17.4
in independent	42.1	41.6	40.5	41.9	42.1
in FE sector	15.4	14.8	14.9	15.1	15.2

Anti-Litter Campaigns

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action she is taking to promote anti-litter campaigns in schools. [1472]

Jacqui Smith: Anti-litter campaigns are supported by guidance for primary schools relating to the curriculum. For example, geography guidance encourages schools to promote anti-litter activities. Through citizenship lessons pupils learn about what improves and harms their local environments and the ways in which they can play their part in looking after them. Such lessons contribute to pupils' understanding of the consequences of dropping litter.

Anti-Semitism

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will conduct an assessment of levels of anti-semitism in English universities. [2020]

Bill Rammell: Higher education institutions are autonomous bodies and are responsible for the management of their own affairs. Their governing bodies have a duty to ensure that non-discriminatory practices are followed, in accordance with current equality legislation. The universities' representative body, Universities UK, has asked the Equality Challenge Unit (sponsored by the HE Funding Councils, Universities UK, and the Standing Conference of Principals) to look at the issue of extremism and intolerance on campus with a view to updating guidance to universities. I welcome this. It would be for Universities UK to monitor levels of discrimination against all minority groups and to consider whether any assessments should be carried out across the sector.

Building Schools for the Future

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the progress of each successful bid in the Building Schools for the Future initiative. [752]

Jacqui Smith: Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is the strategic programme of capital investment, currently worth over £2 billion a year, through which we are transforming our nation's secondary school estate. More than a quarter of local authorities are now part of this ambitious programme, and the following are some headlines on the progress of current BSF projects.

Of our 17 Wave 1/Pathfinder projects; 16 Education Visions have been signed off, 11 Business Cases have been approved (the remainder are due to be approved by September 2005). eight projects have gone out to market, three of which have issued their short list of preferred bidders. Local Education Partnerships (LEPs) will be set up between March 2006 and March 2007. The first school will be open by the beginning of 2007. The following table shows the progress each Wave 1/Pathfinder project has made:

Building schools for the future (BSF)

Local authority	*Bradford*	*Bristol*	*Newcastle*	*Sheffield*	*Greenwich*	*Solihull*
Number of projects	1	2	3	4	5	6
Percentage	5.9	11.8	17.6	23.5	29.4	35.3
PID issued	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Education vision signed off	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SBC submitted to DfES	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OBC submitted to DfES	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OBC to PRG review	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OJEU issued	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Long list announced	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
ITN issued/short list	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
Preferred bidder announcer	—	—	—	—	—	—
Financial close/LEP set up	—	—	—	—	—	—
Start construction	—	—	—	—	—	—
Opening of first school	—	—	—	—	—	—
Opening of last school	—	—	—	—	—	—

Local authority	*Lancs*	*Lewisham*	*Knowsley*	*Leeds*	*Leicester*	*Stoke*
Number of projects	7	8	9	10	11	12
Percentage	41.2	47.1	52.9	58.8	64.7	70.6
PID issued	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Education vision signed off	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SBC submitted to DfES	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OBC submitted to DfES	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a
OBC to PRG review	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a
OJEU issued	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	—
Long list announced	—	—	—	—	—	—
ITN issued/short list	—	—	—	—	—	—
Preferred bidder announcer	—	—	—	—	—	—
Financial close/LEP set up	—	—	—	—	—	—
Start construction	—	—	—	—	—	—
Opening of first school	—	—	—	—	—	—
Opening of last school	—	n/a	—	—	—	—

Local authority	*W. Forest*	*Manchester*	*Sunderland*	*STaG*	*Newham*
Number of projects	13	14	15	16	17
Percentage	76.5	82.4	88.2	94.1	100.0
PID issued	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Education vision signed off	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
SBC submitted to DfES	Yes	—	—	—	—
OBC submitted to DfES	—	—	—	—	—
OBC to PRG review	—	n/a	n/a	—	—
OJEU issued	—	—	—	—	—
Long list announced	—	—	—	—	—
ITN issued/short list	—	—	—	—	—
Preferred bidder announcer	—	—	—	—	—
Financial close/LEP set up	—	—	—	—	—
Start construction	—	—	—	—	—
Opening of first school	—	—	—	—	—
Opening of last school	—	—	—	—	—

Our Wave 2 authorities are engaged in regular project team meetings. The first Education Visions are expected this month. The first business cases are due to be submitted in September.

Initial meetings have been held between most Wave 3 authorities and the DfES, PfS and 4ps. Education Visions are due to be signed-off in January/February 2006.

All local authorities will benefit from the renewal of their secondary school estates through Building Schools for the Future. Broad indications of where they are currently prioritised for investment can be found at www.bsf.gov.uk/documents (Select 'Local Authority Project by Wave').

City Academies

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of lessons in city academy schools are setted. [1030]

Jacqui Smith: We do not collect this information centrally. Academies are free to decide whether or not to set classes.

Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which consultants were employed by her Department in each of the last three years. [932]

Maria Eagle: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will respond to the letter of 15 April from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire. [2051]

Jacqui Smith: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Schools, The Lord Adonis, replied to the hon. Member's letter of 15 April on 27 May.

Education

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many applications for places in Hammersmith and Fulham schools were turned down in 2004–05. [856]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect this information. The administration of school admissions and the collection of data relating to applications is the responsibility of individual admission authorities.

However, with the introduction of mandatory co-ordinated admission arrangements for secondary intakes for 2005/06 and primary intakes for 2006/07, local authorities should have more easily accessible information on how well parental preferences have been met for all maintained schools in their area.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she is taking to increase secondary school provision in Hertfordshire to take account of the increasing population. [1121]

Jacqui Smith: It is the responsibility of each local education authority to plan school provision in its area taking account of changes in local population.

The Department provides capital support for local authorities and schools to invest in school infrastructure, including for the provision of new pupil places. Hertfordshire has received £48.8 million specifically for new pupil places since 1997 and will receive a further £18.3 million over the next three years. The Department now allocates much of its capital resources to local authorities and schools by needs-related formulae, as they can best decide how to target their highest priority needs, in accordance with their asset management planning processes.

Local authorities can also use other resources such as negotiated contributions from developers for new school provision, under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as substituted by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991).

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take measures to provide all children in Hertfordshire with fully funded access to music classes at primary and secondary school levels. [1127]

Jacqui Smith: The National Curriculum provides all children aged 5–14 with a statutory entitlement to music lessons, giving them the opportunity to sing, to play musical instruments, to hear live and recorded music from a range of traditions and styles, to compose and to perform. Music can then be taken as an option at GCSE.

In 1999 we established a Music Standards Fund of £59 million per year for additional musical activities outside the classroom. Activities funded include instrumental and vocal tuition, festivals and ensembles, instrument loan schemes and remissions policies.

In 2000 we further pledged that, over time, all primary school pupils who want to should have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. We have now piloted a Key Stage 2 instrumental programme in 12 areas, including Hertfordshire. For 2005/06, Hertfordshire received £782,448 through the Music Standards Fund.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take measures to ensure that all primary and secondary schools in Hertfordshire have music teachers; and if she will make a statement. [1128]

Jacqui Smith: Quality music provision depends on having a strong and diverse workforce with a wide variety of skills and experience. Through the Music Manifesto and our ambitious Wider Opportunities programme for primary pupils, we are encouraging classroom teachers to work in partnership with other music leaders and teachers from Local Education Authority Music Services, music institutions such as local orchestras and opera companies and the community music sector.

From September 2000, £6,000 training bursaries are being paid to eligible students on secondary Postgraduate Certificate in Education courses in music. Between January 2002 and January 2005 we have seen a 38 per cent. decrease in the number of vacant music teacher posts nationally. Figures on the number of vacant music teacher posts in Hertfordshire are not collected centrally.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take measures to ensure that Hertfordshire's secondary schools retain sixth forms; and if she will make a statement. [1129]

Jacqui Smith: The organisation of education and training provision for 16–19 year olds in an area is a matter for local stakeholders, primarily the local Learning and Skills Council and the Local Authority. The LSC informs me that, following consultation on its Strategic Area Review options for Hertfordshire, it has no plans to close school sixth forms in the Broxbourne area. The Department's five year strategy announced measures to increase choice and diversity in 16–19 provision. We are currently developing guidance for stakeholders on this with a view to issuing it in the coming months.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her estimate is of the cost of the education maintenance allowance in each year from 2004–05 to 2008–09; and if she will make a statement. [1300]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 24 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 48W.

EU Legislation

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what EU legislation was implemented by the Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) Regulations 2000. [1712]

Bill Rammell: No EU legislation was implemented by the Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) Regulations 2000.

Family Planning Funding

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money her Department has given in each of the last five years to *(a)* Brook, *(b)* Family Planning Association, *(c)* Marie Stopes International, *(d)* British Pregnancy Advisory Service and *(e)* Education for Choice; and for what purposes. [1516]

Beverley Hughes: The amounts paid by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to the organisations listed in the question, along with a summary of the purpose for which the payments were made, are included in the following table. This reply does not include payments which may have been made by the Department of Health in support of the teenage pregnancy strategy, before responsibility for the strategy was transferred to DfES in April 2004.

	Organisation	*Amount (£)*	*Purpose*
October 2004 to March 2006	FPA	250,637	Delivery of the 'Speakeasy' training programme, which enables parents and carers to have more confidence and knowledge in speaking to their children about sex and relationships
2004/05	FPA	10,000	To develop Good Practice Guidance for Primary Care Trusts on delivering young people friendly sexual health advice services
2004/06	FPA	58,000	To develop and deliver a training course for health and non-health professionals, to enable them to provide more proactive contraceptive advice to help young people to avoid second unplanned pregnancies—estimates suggest that 20 per cent. of births conceived to under-18s are second pregnancies
2004/06	FPA	20,565	To deliver courses on sex, relationships, pregnancy and parenthood for those working with looked after children and young people
2004/05	Brook	11,282	To develop a new contraception information leaflet for young parents to help support them in preventing second unplanned pregnancies
2004/06	Education for Choice	38,000	Delivery of training programmes for health and education professionals to facilitate discussion about pregnancy and abortion; revision and development of EfC website; work with boys and young men; and support for parents to help them discuss pregnancy choices and abortion

Foster Placements

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of foster placements ended in adoption in each year since 1997. [1686]

Maria Eagle: The table shows the number and proportion of children ceasing to be looked after from a foster placement in England after being adopted in the years 2000–01 to 2003–04.

Children ceasing to be looked after in a foster placement [1,2,3]

Numbers and percentages

	Year ending 31 March:			
	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Adopted by former foster carer[4]	430	550	540	510
Foster placement ceased for other reason[5,6]	14,100	13,900	13,000	13,500
Percentage of children ceasing care from a foster placement adopted	3.0	3.8	4.0	3.6

[1] Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.

[2] Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been counted.

[3] Figures under 1,000 have been rounded to the nearest 10. All other figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.

[4] Figures are taken from the AD1 return.

[5] Figures for 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 are derived from the SSDA903 one third sample.

[6] Figures for 2003–04 are taken from the SSDA903 return, which for the first time since1996–97 covered all children looked after.

Source:

Table I 'Children Looked After in England (including adoptions and care leavers) 2003–04', Table Z 'Children Looked After by local authorities, Year Ending 31 March 2004'.

Freedom of Speech

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her Department's policy is on freedom of speech in universities. [1782]

Bill Rammell: Higher Education Institutions are autonomous bodies responsible for the management of their own affairs. Their governing bodies have a duty to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure freedom of speech within the law for students and members of staff of the institution and for visiting speakers. Governing bodies must also ensure that use of the institution's premises is not denied to any individual or body of people on the grounds of their beliefs, views, policies or objectives.

GCSEs

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils sat GCSE examinations in *(a)* science, *(b)* biology, *(c)* chemistry, *(d)* physics, *(e)* French and *(f)* history in each year since 1995. [1259]

Jacqui Smith: GCSE (Full Course) attempts[1] of 15-year-old pupils[2] in schools in selected subjects can be found in the following table:

Number of attempts[1] *in year*	*Single*[4] *Award Science*	*Double*[4] *Award Science*	*Other*[4,6] *Science*	*Biological Sciences*[5]	*Chemistry*	*Physics*	*French*	*History*
2003/04[3]	54,977	479,528	2,732	44,755	43,037	42,447	289,549	205,399
2002/03	53,035	474,451	2,745	43,623	40,865	40,064	304,472	194,801
2001/02	51,662	466,469	2,785	40,526	39,067	38,640	311,847	193,945
2000/01	49,896	464,403	2,977	40,456	38,797	38,455	321,207	195,231
1999/2000	48,565	445,100	3,106	39,376	37,699	37,532	313,146	190,279
1998/99	50,182	441,897	3,423	38,785	37,640	37,205	311,384	188,934
1997/98	52,383	431,348	3,826	37,890	36,544	36,205	307,293	189,070
1996/97	54,631	439,480	4,881	36,641	35,154	34,541	306,055	207,486
1995/96	62,844	434,946	5,344	37,576	36,279	35,727	315,746	212,407
1994/95	59,836	426,573	4,987	34,604	33,598	33,229	316,847	223,357

[1] For each subject, only one attempt per pupil is counted—that which received the highest grade.

[2] The figures reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

[3] Numbers for 2003/04 are revised figures, for 1995/96–2002/03 are final figures.

[4] Figures are not available for Science GCSE but we are able to provide figures for Single Award Science, Dual Award Science and Other Science.

[5] Biological Sciences includes Human Biology and Social Biology.

[6] Other Science includes: Science—Biology and Chemistry; Science—Biology and Physics; Science—Chemistry and Physics; Aeronautics; Agricultural Science; Applied Science; Astronomy; Botany; Electronics; Engineering Science; Environmental Science; Geology; Horticulture; Meteorology; Physical Science; Psychology (as a Science); Robotics; Rural Science; Science in society; Science Technology; Zoology.

Gershon Review

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes in expenditure her Department expects to arise from the plans outlined in her Department's technical note produced for the Gershon review proposing *(a)* a reduction in the number of teachers and their replacement with interactive whiteboards and classroom supervisors and *(b)* replacing supply teachers with classroom supervisors. [983]

Jacqui Smith: The Department's technical note does not propose *(a)* a reduction in the number of teachers and their replacement with interactive whiteboards and classroom supervisors or *(b)* replacing all supply teachers with classroom supervisors.

The Gershon review focuses on improving efficiency and recycling such gains into the frontline. The Department's expenditure therefore remains unaffected and the Department will continue to invest in schools at the record levels already announced.

The effective use of information and communications technology (ICT), such as electronic interactive whiteboards, is a significant and powerful tool for increasing teachers' productive time and improving the quality of learning and teaching. ICT supports and enhances quality teaching and is not a substitute for it. The January2005 figures show that the number of teachers increased by 4,000 during the previous year.

Schools spent around £800 million in 2003–04 on agency staff and supply teachers. As part of remodelling the school work force the Department is supporting schools in developing and implementing more effective and cost efficient solutions. For example, the Department does not believe that it is a good use of teachers' time to cover for absent colleagues. The use of established cover staff for short-term absences provides better supervision by staff who belong to the school and know the children concerned, and at less cost.

Education Finance

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the Government grant per pupil in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary education in Torbay was for the most recent year for which figures are available; [1257]

(2) what the Government grant per pupil in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary education was (i) in each region in England and (ii) for England as a whole in the last year for which figures are available. [1258]

Jacqui Smith: The following table gives our most recent figures, for local education authorities in England in 2004–05, for the total funding per pupil in cash terms.

These funding figures include funding through Education Formula Spending/Standard Spending Assessment and grants allocated at an LEA level; they also include the pensions transfer to EPS and to the Learning and Skills Council.

England LEAs—funding per pupil in cash terms 2004–05

£

		3 to10 years Total	11 to 15 years Total
	England	*3,560*	*4,460*
	North East	*3,540*	*4,480*
841	Darlington	3,420	4,310
840	Durham	3,440	4,310
390	Gateshead	3,560	4,570
805	Hartlepool	3,610	4,570
806	Middlesbrough	3,890	5,340
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	3,740	4,730
392	North Tyneside	3,390	4,400
929	Northumberland	3,350	4,240
807	Redcar and Cleveland	3,580	4,500
393	South Tyneside	3,700	4,590
808	Stockton-on-Tees	3,530	4,520
394	Sunderland	3,550	4,460
	North West	*3,500*	*4,400*
889	Blackburn with Darwen	3,860	4,780
890	Blackpool	3,480	4,490
350	Bolton	3,440	4,230
351	Bury	3,340	4,190
875	Cheshire	3,200	4,000
909	Cumbria	3,410	4,190
876	Halton	3,740	4,750
340	Knowsley	3,960	5,130
888	Lancashire	3,370	4,190
341	Liverpool	3,880	4,980
352	Manchester	4,110	5,320
353	Oldham	3,640	4,520
354	Rochdale	3,670	4,660
355	Salford	3,700	4,720
342	St. Helens	3,520	4,510
343	Sefton	3,400	4,370
356	Stockport	3,200	4,050
357	Tameside	3,430	4,310
358	Trafford	3,230	4,090
877	Warrington	3,110	3,960
359	Wigan	3,330	4,170
344	Wirral	3,510	4,480
	Yorkshire and the Humber	*3,470*	*4,350*
370	Barnsley	3,480	4,440
380	Bradford	3,710	4,680
381	Calderdale	3,440	4,300
371	Doncaster	3,540	4,450
811	East Riding of Yorkshire	3,240	3,980
810	Kingston Upon Hull, City of	3,690	4,650
382	Kirklees	3,530	4,430
383	Leeds	3,440	4,420
812	North East Lincolnshire	3,460	4,370
813	North Lincolnshire	3,410	4,270
815	North Yorkshire	3,350	4,020
372	Rotherham	3,500	4,390
373	Sheffield	3,530	4,510
384	Wakefield	3,310	4,140
816	York	3,130	4,020
	East Midlands	*3,350*	*4,170*
831	Derby	3,500	4,450
830	Derbyshire	3,250	4,020
856	Leicester	3,860	4,670
855	Leicestershire	3,100	3,860
925	Lincolnshire	3,360	4,200
928	Northamptonshire	3,300	4,140
892	Nottingham	3,880	5,150
891	Nottinghamshire	3,210	4,010
857	Rutland	3,310	4,060

England LEAs—funding per pupil in cash terms 2004–05

£

		3 to10 years Total	11 to 15 years Total
	West Midlands	*3,450*	*4,340*
330	Birmingham	3,840	4,910
331	Coventry	3,570	4,470
332	Dudley	3,230	4,100
884	Herefordshire	3,500	4,240
333	Sandwell	3,660	4,580
893	Shropshire	3,360	4,150
334	Solihull	3,220	4,060
860	Staffordshire	3,140	3,940
861	Stoke-on-Trent	3,600	4,610
894	Telford and Wrekin	3,430	4,300
335	Walsall	3,430	4,270
937	Warwickshire	3,270	4,100
336	Wolverhampton	3,660	4,730
885	Worcestershire	3,140	4,000
	East of England	*3,430*	*4,300*
820	Bedfordshire	3,370	4,280
873	Cambridgeshire	3,350	4,130
881	Essex	3,460	4,360
919	Hertfordshire	3,400	4,290
821	Luton	3,820	4,850
926	Norfolk	3,430	4,210
874	Peterborough	3,640	4,560
882	Southend-on-Sea	3,520	4,490
935	Suffolk	3,240	4,070
883	Thurrock	3,700	4,820
	London	*4,350*	*5,440*
202	Camden	5,400	6,610
203	Greenwich	4,800	6,060
204	Hackney	5,470	7,310
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	5,240	6,640
206	Islington	5,310	6,850
207	Kensington and Chelsea	5,440	7,010
208	Lambeth	5,370	7,280
209	Lewisham	4,930	6,490
210	Southwark	5,000	6,940
211	Tower Hamlets	5,630	6,960
212	Wandsworth	4,650	6,050
213	Westminster	5,120	6,270
301	Barking and Dagenham	4,060	5,080
302	Barnet	3,880	4,770
303	Bexley	3,520	4,430
304	Brent	4,470	5,730
305	Bromley	3,520	4,500
306	Croydon	3,820	5,000
307	Ealing	4,270	5,460
308	Enfield	4,030	4,980
309	Haringey	4,680	6,200
310	Harrow	3,890	4,840
311	Havering	3,480	4,480
312	Hillingdon	3,770	4,700
313	Hounslow	4,190	5,140
314	Kingston upon Thames	3,550	4,490
315	Merton	3,890	4,910
316	Newham	4,620	5,680
317	Redbridge	3,750	4,580
318	Richmond upon Thames	3,530	4,550
319	Sutton	3,620	4,510
320	Waltham Forest	4,300	5,500
	South East	*3,440*	*4,340*
867	Bracknell Forest	3,410	4,490
846	Brighton and Hove	3,620	4,570
825	Buckinghamshire	3,430	4,310
845	East Sussex	3,500	4,410
850	Hampshire	3,300	4,150
921	Isle of Wight	3,540	4,470
886	Kent	3,470	4,400
887	Medway	3,360	4,270
826	Milton Keynes	3,570	4,490
931	Oxfordshire	3,450	4,310
851	Portsmouth	3,570	4,600
870	Reading	3,760	4,960

England LEAs—funding per pupil in cash terms 2004–05

£

		3 to10 years Total	*11 to 15 years Total*
871	Slough	4,150	5,290
852	Southampton	3,640	4,600
936	Surrey	3,380	4,260
869	West Berkshire	3,430	4,250
938	West Sussex	3,360	4,190
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	3,470	4,400
872	Wokingham	3,290	4,150
	South West	*3,290*	*4,120*
800	Bath and North East Somerset	3,160	3,960
837	Bournemouth	3,230	4,070
801	Bristol, City of	3,550	4,760
908	Cornwall	3,390	4,120
878	Devon	3,340	4,070
835	Dorset	3,210	4,020
916	Gloucestershire	3,230	4,040
802	North Somerset	3,220	4,090
879	Plymouth	3,310	4,190
836	Poole	3,040	4,050
933	Somerset	3,300	4,160
803	South Gloucestershire	3,110	3,990
866	Swindon	3,280	4,140
880	Torbay	3,270	4,160
865	Wiltshire	3,330	4,060

Homework

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidelines her Department has issued on homework in secondary schools for year *(a)* seven, *(b)* eight, *(c)* nine, *(d)* 10 and *(e)* 11. [1241]

Jacqui Smith: My Department issued the publication "Homework: Guidelines for Primary and Secondary Schools" in November 1998. This includes a chapter providing specific guidance on homework for secondary school pupils. We do not provide specific guidance for particular year groups.

Individual Learning Accounts

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will bring forward proposals to replace individual learning accounts in England; and if she will discuss such proposals with the administration in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* Wales. [1325]

Phil Hope: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given on 17 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 450W, given by my hon. Friend and former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills and Vocational Education, (Mr. Ivan Lewis).

Key Stage 2

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the primary schools in England where 50 per cent. of pupils achieved Level 5 in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2003–04. [1029]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

There were 4,417 maintained primary schools in England where 50 per cent. or more of pupils achieved Level 5 in reading in the 2003–04 Key Stage 2 national curriculum tests.

The school level figures are labelled provisional because they were not checked by schools as part of the 2004 primary school achievement and attainment tables.

Leading Edge Schools Programme

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the future of the Leading Edge Schools programme. [1449]

Jacqui Smith: In the Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners, published in July last year, we set out our proposals for high performing specialist schools to be able to take on leading roles. Details about the future of the Leading Edge Partnership Programme in the context of this Five Year Strategy will be published in due course.

Looked-after Children

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many looked-after children there are, broken down by local authority; and how many and what proportion of looked-after children experienced three or more placement moves in each year for which figures are available, broken down by local authority. [2274]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is published by the Department in tables 1 and 11 of "Children Looked After by Local Authorities, Year Ending 31 March 2004 Volume 2: Local Authority Tables". This is available on the internet at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000569/vweb01–2005_2.pdf

Popular Schools Expansion Programme

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools have applied for funding under the Popular Schools Expansion Programme, indicating in each case *(a)* whether this application has been successful, *(b)* the amount granted, *(c)* the number of additional places provided and *(d)* the cost of an additional place in each case. [1378]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows, for each school which has applied for funding under the Successful and Popular Schools Programme, *(a)* whether the application has been successful, *(b)* the amount granted, and *(c)* the number of additional places provided. The cost of an additional place in each case is not held centrally, as funding is not analysed between the direct costs of an extra place and the costs of improving facilities used by the school as a whole.

School	*Application*	*Amount granted £000*[1]	*Number of additional places*[2]
Bury Church of England High School, Bury	Successful	1,600	122
Fairfield High School, Bristol City	Successful	18,223	495
Parrenthorn High School, Bury	Successful	500	121
Maiden Erlegh School, Wokingham	Successful	2,000	35

School	*Application*	*Amount granted £000*[1]	*Number of additional places*[2]
St. Mary's Catholic College, Wirral	Successful	3,600	178
Chingford Foundation School, Waltham Forest	Successful	Being finalised	201
Bradon Forest School, Wiltshire	In progress	—	—
Old Swinford Hospital, Dudley	In progress	—	—
Wymondham College, Norfolk	In progress	—	—
Brownhills Community Technology College, Walsall	In progress	—	—
Highcliffe School, Dorset	In progress	—	—
Haydon School, Hillingdon	In progress	—	—
West Hatch High School, Essex	Unsuccessful	—	—
The Hayfield School, Doncaster	Unsuccessful	—	—
The King David Community School, Manchester	Withdrawn	—	—
Gordano Community School, North Somerset	Unsuccessful	—	—
St. John The Baptist School, Surrey	Unsuccessful	—	—

[1] The total amount includes sums granted by the Department up to £500,000, and any further sum due from the local authority in respect of extra places. Further sums due from the local authority may also include major building work which is part of a wider project.

[2] The number of additional places is calculated by subtracting numbers on roll from the proposed new capacity. The large increase for Fairfield High School includes additional pupils resulting from the reorganisation of several schools.

School Advisers

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has for link advisers to schools. [1625]

Jacqui Smith: Most local authorities that maintain schools engage education specialists to work with those schools. For the portion of these specialists' time when they are helping authorities hold schools to account, they are commonly termed 'link advisers'. The introduction of the School Improvement Partner function means that the accountability role will pass to School Improvement Partners. This means that a portion of the work of local authorities' current education specialists will no longer be needed.

What it does not mean is that the individual education professionals will all have to cease employment on school improvement work. There will be opportunities for some of them to become School Improvement Partners for all kinds of school, but particularly for primary schools, where we envisage that the majority of School Improvement Partners will come from local authority backgrounds. And there is a range of school improvement work beyond the School Improvement Partner function, some that schools commission and some that local authorities commission to support weak, failing and underperforming schools. The arrival of the School Improvement Partner function does not alter the need for this other work.

School Closures

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will give *(a)* the name, *(b)* the reason for closure and *(c)* the local education authority for every school closed in each year since 1997. [759]

Jacqui Smith: Details of the 1,807 school closures since 1997, as notified to the Department, have been placed in the House Library. The Department does not record detailed information on the reasons for a school's closure except to record whether the closure is part of a local reorganisation or amalgamation of schools, is necessary for the establishment of a new school or is a straight school closure. 75 per cent. of the closures listed flow from an amalgamation of two schools, a local reorganisation or the establishment of other school(s).

Since 1999 decisions on changes to school organisation have been taken locally by the School Organisation Committee (SOC), or the schools adjudicator if the SOC could not reach a unanimous decision. The Secretary of State has no role in the process.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school closures due to falling rolls there were in each of the last five years, broken down by education authority. [1256]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not record detailed information on the reasons for a school's closure and we therefore cannot provide information on the number of school closures due to falling rolls. The following table contains the numbers of school closures for each year including those flowing from local reorganisations of schools, amalgamations of two or more schools and school closures where no new school was established.

	Primary	*Secondary*	*Total*
2000	171	74	245
2001	225	39	264
2002	216	22	238
2003	196	23	219
2004	222	33	255
2005[1]	17	0	17
Total	1,047	191	1,238

[1] To date.

Note:

Middle Deemed Primary Schools are included in Primary column, Middle Deemed Secondary are included in the Secondary column.

Since 1999 decisions on changes to school organisation have been taken locally by the School Organisation Committee (SOC), or the schools adjudicator if the SOC could not reach a unanimous decision. The Secretary of State has no role in the process.

School Funding

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many responses she has received to her consultation on new school funding arrangements from 2006–07; and if she will place a summary of the responses in the Library. [1014]

Jacqui Smith: My Department has received just over 770 detailed responses to the consultation on our proposals for new school funding arrangements to be introduced from April 2006, together with around 1,650 letters as part of a campaign initiated by the F40 group of local authorities.

The consultation period ended on 13 May. A consultation report will be published when our analysis of all the responses is complete, and copies will be placed in the Library. We will consider all the views expressed very carefully as we consider the way forward on school funding in the light of the consultation, and expect to announce our final decisions on the new arrangements over the summer.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much central Government funding will be allocated to each local education authority in England per *(a)* primary pupil and *(b)* secondary pupil in 2005–06; and what the total allocation for England is in each case. [1169]

Jacqui Smith: Funding figures for 2005–06 are not available as not all grant figures for 2005–06 are yet to hand.

School Improvement Partners

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what arrangements she has made to fund School Improvement Partners. [1624]

Jacqui Smith: The role of School Improvement Partners is part of a ground-breaking new approach for supporting schools and holding them to account, called the New Relationship with Schools. Working from powerful new data analyses and from schools' own evaluations of themselves, the New Relationship will get deeper into each school's key issues than has been possible hitherto and will do so with less red tape. But the underlying purpose of holding each school to account is not new and the New Relationship does not change the formal accountability requirements.

A school's Improvement Partner is a credible, experienced education practitioner charged with challenging and supporting the school. School Improvement Partners are accredited to a demanding national standard and work locally.

Local authorities will be able to find part of the funding for the School Improvement Partner function by discontinuing some of their existing work—the series of meetings and reporting currently used for formal school accountability, including reviews of school targets. But for secondary schools, existing funding will not suffice. The Government are making a contribution that we expect will cover the majority of the costs, because the School Improvement Partner function requires more investment than the current function that local authorities will be able to discontinue. We are offering each local authority £2,000 a year for each of the secondary schools to which it appoints a School Improvement Partner, together with a one-off payment of £380 for each secondary school to support the establishment of the School Improvement Partner function. For School Improvement Partners for primary schools roll-out of the function begins a year later than for secondary schools, in September 2006. We are just beginning a trial of the School Improvement Partner function for special schools.

School Leavers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to reduce levels of unemployment among school leavers. [295]

Maria Eagle: Reducing youth unemployment is a priority for this Government, which has a target to reduce the proportion of 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) by 2 percentage points between 2004 and 2010. The recent 14 to 19 Education and Skills White Paper sets out how we will build a system to raise participation and achievement; ensuring young people are able to master the functional skills, attitudes and behaviours needed for their continued engagement in education and employment after age 16.

School leavers in particular may seek information, advice and guidance on their post-16 options from their school, the Connexions Service, or the Connexions Direct helpline. The forthcoming Youth Green Paper will examine how all those involved in delivering information, advice and guidance can work together to ensure all young people receive the help and support they need.

The Connexions Service, which works closely with Jobcentre Plus actively identifies school leavers who are unemployed, and seeks to find them appropriate work or learning opportunities. Those not yet ready may undertake Entry to Employment, a tailored programme of learning and support to enable them to progress to further learning opportunities or meaningful employment. The Government announced, in the recent Budget, plans to pilot Activity Agreements and an Activity Allowance to help re-engage 16 to 17-year-olds who have been out of education, employment or training for some time.

The Education Maintenance Allowance gives young people from lower income households the financial support they need to remain in education. Young parents may also receive funding to cover the cost of child care through the Care to Learn initiative.

School Meals

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when *(a)* Lewisham local education authority and *(b)* schools in Lewisham are expected to receive extra funding to improve school meals. [1596]

Jacqui Smith: Over the three years 2005–07 to 2007–08, all maintained schools in England will receive a share of the £220 million set aside to help local education authorities and schools strengthen their support for healthy eating and to provide better quality food. Of this, £30 million each year will go to schools to help meet transitional costs involved in developing and improving their "whole school" approach to food. £30/50/50 million will go to LEAs to enable them to support schools with this process, with an emphasis on schools in deprived areas and schools starting from a low base.

The first instalment of this additional funding will be available to schools and LEAs this autumn. Further details about the distribution of both grants between individual local authorities and schools will be announced in due course.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much will be made available to schools in Leeds to improve school meals over the next three years; and if she will make a statement. [1728]

Jacqui Smith: Over the three years 2005–07 to 2007–08, all maintained schools in England will receive a share of the £220 million set aside to help local education authorities and schools strengthen their support for healthy eating and to provide better quality food. Of this, £30 million each year will go to schools to help meet transitional costs involved in developing and improving their "whole school" approach to food. £30/50/50 million will go to LEAs to enable them to support schools with this process, with an emphasis on schools in deprived areas and schools starting from a low base.

The first instalment of this additional funding will be available to schools and LEAs this autumn. Further details about the distribution of both grants between individual local authorities and schools will be announced in due course.

School Sport

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many children received the Government's target of two hours' school sport each week in the last period for which figures are available; and how this figure is calculated; [1735]

(2) how much of the £750 million pledged to school sport has been *(a)* committed and *(b)* spent. [1736]

Jacqui Smith: The results from the first PE, School Sport and Club Links survey (published on 29 April 2004) showed that 62 per cent. of 5 to 16-year-olds are participating in at least two hours high quality PE and school sport each week. The survey covers information—taken independently—from over 6,500 schools that were in School Sport Partnerships at that time. We hope to publish the results of the second annual survey in September 2005.

Over 3,000 schools in England are benefiting directly from £686 million investment to enhance school sport facilities from the Big Lottery Fund (previously the New Opportunities Fund). £750 million represents the total budget for the United Kingdom. To date, £622 million of the total £750 million budget has already been allocated to projects and is therefore in the process of being drawn down. £70.4 million has been spent. This reflects the fact that the programme was always intended to be a 5–6 year programme, with most projects starting on site during 2004–05.

Schools

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many new secondary schools have opened in Hertfordshire in each year since 1997; and how many new secondary schools are scheduled to open in Hertfordshire in each year between 2005 and 2011. [788]

Jacqui Smith: According to departmental records one secondary school opened in Hertfordshire LEA in September 2000, following a local re-organisation of schools. The Department has also been informed that proposals have been approved for a further secondary school to open in September 2006.

We have not been informed of any other proposals for new schools.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many local education authorities have submitted schemes for removing surplus places in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in each of the last six years; and if she will estimate the total consequent change in education spending in each year. [933]

Jacqui Smith: Responsibility for ensuring that there are enough school places in an area rests with the local authority. Decisions about school organisation—including to remove surplus places—are taken locally by the School Organisation Committee or by the independent schools adjudicator where the SOC cannot agree unanimously. Local authorities do not submit schemes to this Department.

There is no specific capital programme for the removal of surplus places. Much of our capital support is allocated to local authorities and schools by formulae, linked to locally agreed asset management plans. This enables decisions to be taken locally on how these resources should be invested. In addition, surplus place removal can be achieved through wider projects supported under Building Schools for the Future and the Targeted Capital Fund programmes.

While we have no information available on savings achieved through surplus place removal, we support such action where it is economic to do so and where it makes sense in terms of local education provision.

Secondary School Expenditure

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the expenditure per secondary school pupil was in *(a)* each inner London local education authority and *(b)* Southampton local education authority in each year since 1997. [1697]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is contained within the following table. There are two main reasons for the difference in spending: first, most inner London authorities have more pupils living in deprived circumstances than Southampton and receive extra funding to reflect that. Inner London authorities also receive extra funding to reflect the high costs of recruiting and retaining staff.

Secondary school based expenditure per pupil since 1997 in Southampton LEA and each inner London LEA

£

LEA name	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*[3,4]	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*[3,5]	*2003–04*[5]
	Secondary school based expenditure[1] *per pupil*[2]						
Southampton	2,420	2,540	2,730	2,840	3,190	3,360	3,760
Inner London[6]							
Camden	3,160	3,140	3,310	3,510	4,020	5,010	5,050
Hackney	3,070	3,040	3,450	4,030	4,820	4,320	4,330
Hammersmith and Fulham	3,400	3,500	3,510	3,650	3,960	4,110	4,770
Haringey	3,170	3,360	3,320	3,760	4,370	4,360	4,900
Islington	3,170	3,120	3,320	3,970	4,750	4,800	5,060
Kensington and Chelsea	3,410	3,400	3,700	4,140	4,280	4,680	5,140
Lambeth	3,290	3,530	3,510	3,400	3,490	4,890	5,250
Lewisham	3,050	3,090	3,280	3,760	4,250	4,330	4,690
Newham	2,820	2,880	3,110	3,730	4,100	4,120	4,370
Southwark	3,040	3,270	3,620	3,730	5,160	4,620	4,950
Tower Hamlets	3,200	3,380	3,830	4,370	4,950	4,860	5,400
Wandsworth	2,640	2,750	3,270	3,600	3,930	2,800	3,830
Westminster	3,050	3,140	3,440	4,100	4,810	4,620	4,940

[1] School based expenditure includes only expenditure incurred directly by the schools. This includes the pay of teachers and school-based support staff, school premises costs, books and equipment, and certain other supplies and services, less any capital items funded from recurrent spending and income from sales, fees and charges and rents and rates. This excludes the central cost of support services such as home to school transport, local authority administration and the financing of capital expenditure.

[2] Pupil numbers include only those pupils attending LEA maintained secondary schools and are draw from the DES Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

[3] 1999–2000 saw a change in data source when the data collection moved from the RO1 form collected by the ODPM to the section 52 form from the DfES. 2002–03 saw a further break in the time series following the introduction of Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) and the associated restructuring of the outturn tables. The change in sources occurred between 1998–99 and 1999–2000, and 2001–02 and 2002–03.

[4] The 1999–2000 figures reflect the return of grant maintained schools to local authority maintenance.

[5] The 2002–03 and 2003–04 calculation is broadly similar to the calculation in previous years. However, 2001–02 and earlier years includes all premature retirement compensation (PRC) and Crombie payments, mandatory PRC payments and other indirect employee expenses, while in 2002 -03 and 2003–04 only the schools element of these categories is included. In 2001–02 this accounted for approximately £70 per pupil of the England total, while the schools element of these categories accounted for approximately £50 per pupil of the England total in 2002–03. Also, for some LEAs, expenditure that had previously been attributed to the school sectors was reported within the LEA part of the form in 2002–03 and 2003–04 and would therefore be excluded, though this is not quantifiable from existing sources.

[6] Unit costs in Inner London LEAs are higher than in Outer London and other LEAs, because of higher expenditure on teachers' pay.

Notes:

1. Figures are reported in cash terms and rounded to the nearest £10 as reported by the LEA.
2. City of London LEA has no LEA maintained secondary schools.

Sign Language Courses

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to increase the availability of courses teaching people to use sign language. [930]

Maria Eagle: Information provided by the Council for the Advancement of Communication for Deaf People shows that in 2003–04 over 20,000 people were learning British sign language (BSL)—approximately 18,500 at level one, 400 at level two, 400 at level three and 200 at level four (including those studying at higher education (HE) institutions).

It is recognised that the demand for BSL courses is currently greater than the supply of provision. The main contributory factor is the recognised shortage of BSL tutors. That is why some of the £1.5 million made available by Government to support the recognition of BSL as a European language is being used to fund six initiatives, which will contribute to establishing a Great Britain wide framework to support the recruitment, training and deployment of BSL tutors. The aim is to enhance numbers, status and levels of qualification. The Learning and Skills Council is currently discussing with the DWP how it might work in partnership to assist in the development of the national framework.

Funding is also being made available to support four initiatives which will promote access for BSL users through awareness-raising among employers, among service providers and in the wider community.

HE institutions are autonomous and so free to plan and deliver programmes as they wish. If they choose to run sign language courses, they may use funding provided through the HE Funding Council for England for this purpose. However, records are not kept centrally of the number of HE courses involving the teaching of sign language.

Further Education (Isle of Wight)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she plans to take to reduce the funding differential between pupils on similar courses in Isle of Wight sixth forms and Isle of Wight colleges. [1364]

Bill Rammell: We have brought up funding levels for Further Education (FE) as we said we would, without penalising schools. The Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) funding rates per course in FE have been rising faster than school sixth forms and the gap has narrowed.

Our policy is to raise the level of funding for colleges, as and when we are able to secure the resources to do so.

Student Finance

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make it her policy to make student loans available to people aged over 54 years; and if she will make a statement. [1609]

Bill Rammell: From 2006, tuition fee loans will be available to all students irrespective of their age. We are also increasing the age at which maintenance loans are available to students from 54 to 60; and will keep this position under review.

Surplus School Places

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her Department's policies are on surplus school places in *(a)* rural and *(b)* non-rural for (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools. [1255]

Jacqui Smith: The Government believes that planning the supply of school places is best done at a local level by the local authority. Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient places and that high quality education is provided in a cost effective way. We expect local authorities to take parental preferences into account in the planning process.

In managing surplus places in rural areas local authorities must take into account the presumption against the closure of rural schools which we introduced in February 1998.

To help local authorities manage falling primary school rolls the Department and the Audit Commission have developed a web-based toolkit which offers a range of practical advice and guidance. The toolkit is available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/fallingrolls

Teacher Assaults

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers have been assaulted by *(a)* pupils and *(b)* parents in each year since 1990. [907]

Jacqui Smith: The Health and Safety Executive has collected the following information relating to schools in England and Wales since April 2001. No relevant information is available for earlier years. They are unable to provide a reason for the variation in the number of total injuries over three years.

Occupation of injured person	*Assailant*	*Non-fatal major injuries*	*Over-3-day injuries*	*Total injuries*
2001/02				
Teacher	Parent or other associate of pupil	6	32	38
	Pupil	11	39	50
	Other	3	10	13
Total		20	81	101
2002/03				
Teacher	Parent or other associate of pupil	3	35	38
	Pupil	15	82	97
	Other	—	13	13
Total		18	130	148
2003/04				
Teacher	Parent or other associate of pupil	1	5	6
	Pupil	14	37	51
	Other	—	3	3
Teacher total		15	45	60
2003/04 total		15	45	60

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers in secondary schools have been assaulted by students since 1997. [2219]

Jacqui Smith: Significant injuries to school staff resulting from acts of violence must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive. Since 2001 it has been possible to identify whether the assailant was a pupil. The figures for England and Wales are:

Teachers injured through violence by pupils

	Number of teachers
2001/02	50
2002/03	97
2003/04	51

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many prosecutions have been brought against parents for assaulting teachers in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [775]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not collected. School staff should be able to work in a safe place, free from assault by parents or others. The Department has produced guidance for schools setting out the legal basis on which they can bar or remove intrusive parents or other people from school premises.

EU Presidency

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what communication activities are planned in relation to the policy areas covered by her Department during the UK presidency of the EU; and what budget has been allocated for these activities. [1646]

Bill Rammell: External communications activity for the presidency is being co-ordinated centrally by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. During the UK Presidency of the Education and Youth Council, the external communications we are planning are; information on the DfES presidency internet site, letters and update notes to key stakeholders, information to the school work force about general teaching resources available via the web, and national, regional and specialist media activity. Communications activity has been provided for within existing budgets for the presidency programme.

University Departments

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many university departments have closed in each year since 1997, broken down by subject. [1621]

Bill Rammell: Information on the closure, merger or opening of particular university courses and departments is not collected by the Department. Higher education institutions are autonomous organisations responsible for their own academic direction and strategic use of funds, and any decisions on closures of departments are made by them, not by Government or the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

Work Force Training (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assistance the Department provides in Coventry to promote a well-trained and skilled work force. [1055]

Phil Hope: Central Government provide substantial financial investment in training and skills through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for Coventry and Warwickshire. The LSC works with a range of partners, learning providers and employers. They have conducted an in-depth analysis of sector skills priorities in order to develop appropriate learning provision. The recent White Paper "Getting on in Business; Getting on at Work", announced a National Employer Training Programme which will tailor training solutions to meet the skills needs of employers and their employees. The LSC already works collaboratively with the Business Link in Coventry supporting employers to improve their businesses and they have recently developed Skillssolutions to enable employers to access a full range of information and advice to develop their businesses and staff.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Claims Handling

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to regulate the activities of claims handling businesses; and if she will make a statement. [1091]

Bridget Prentice: We propose to bring forward legislation in the Compensation Bill to regulate claims handling businesses.

Clementi Review

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to take forward the recommendations of the Clementi Review; and if she will make a statement. [1088]

Bridget Prentice: My Department has already made a statement on taking forward the recommendations of the Clementi Review and I refer my hon. Friend for Hendon to the earlier statement made by my predecessor, my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr. Lammy) on 22 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 49WS.

The Government remains committed to consumer focused reform of legal services regulation and has broadly accepted the main recommendations of the Clementi Review. We will publish a White Paper in the autumn, followed by a draft Legal Services Bill which is included in the 2005–06 legislative programme.

Domestic Violence

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the provision of legal aid for domestic violence cases. [1756]

Bridget Prentice: Domestic violence proceedings are a priority area for legal aid funding. The Legal Services Commission's (LSC's) Funding Code Criteria for domestic violence cases are wider than for most other family and non-family areas; they are not limited to any specific definition of domestic violence or abuse. Legal aid solicitors have wide devolved powers to grant funding for victims of domestic violence who are in urgent need of the court's protection. Following the Department's consultation 'A New Focus on Civil Legal Aid', provision was made for the LSC to waive the upper monthly disposable income limit for legal representation in specified domestic violence proceedings.

Legal aid advice is provided by solicitors and advice centres with a contract with the LSC. An LSC leaflet 'Domestic Violence, Abuse and Harassment' is available from solicitors, courts and advice and support agencies. The LSC funds community projects providing advice, legal and practical help on domestic violence.

EU Constitution

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what types of funding from EU institutions for public information on the EU Constitution will be permissible *(a)* before and *(b)* during the referendum on UK ratification. [1214]

Ms Harman: Funding from the EU Institutions for public information on the EU Constitution before and during the referendum will be subject to the rules on donations contained in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

It would not be permissible for a recipient to keep a donation of £200 or more by an EU institution where the recipient is:

(1) a registered political party (other than a minor party), unless the payment is made by or on behalf of the European Parliament for the purpose of assisting MEPs to perform their functions as such members;

(2) a permitted participant not falling within (1) if the payment is for the purpose of meeting referendum expenditure incurred by or on behalf of the permitted participant; or

(3) a member of a registered political party, a member's association or the holder of a relevant elective office, such as an MEP, if the payment is for his use or benefit (in that capacity) in connection with his political activities, unless the payment consists of remuneration or allowances paid to the holder of a relevant elective office in his capacity as such.

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether UK nationals living outside the United Kingdom but within the European Union will be eligible to vote in a referendum on a Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. [1288]

Ms Harman: As the European Union Bill introduced on 24 May 2005 states, the franchise for the referendum is the same as for Westminster parliamentary elections, plus peers who are also members of the House of Lords, and the people of Gibraltar. This includes UK nationals living overseas registered as overseas electors. To register they must have lived in the UK in the last 15 years irrespective of whether they now live in the EU or not.

General Election

John Hemming: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many local authorities arranged during the general elections for their presiding officers to record details of those people who turned up to vote in person, but were turned away because they were registered as absent voters; and how many people were turned away in this manner in each local authority. [906]

Ms Harman: The Government do not collect this information.

John Hemming: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many postal votes were issued for the general elections of *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2005; and how many were counted. [912]

Ms Harman: In the 1997 General Election, 937,205 postal ballots were issued, of which 737,995 (78.7 per cent.) were returned and included in the count. These details are taken from the House of Commons Paper "Election Expenses" (HC 260, session 1998–99).

In the 2001 General Election 1,758, 055 postal votes were issued, of which 1,370,884 (78 per cent.) were returned and included in the count. These details are taken from the independent Electoral Commission's report "Postal votes, proxy votes and spoilt ballot papers at the 2001 general election".

Copies of these publications are in the Library of each House. Information about postal votes and turnout at the 2005 General Election will be included in the Electoral Commission's report on participation and turnout, to be published later in the summer.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will review the penalties for election offences; and if she will make a statement. [745]

Ms Harman: The Government have published a policy paper for discussion on electoral administration. This paper invites comments on existing and proposed new electoral offences and the appropriate penalties to be applied.

House of Lords Reform

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent representations she has received on reform of the House of Lords. [1759]

Ms Harman: The Department regularly receives correspondence from right hon. and hon. Members and members of the public advocating a range of views on House of Lords reform.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on her Department's plans to reform the powers of the House of Lords. [1767]

Ms Harman: The Government set out in its Manifesto its proposal to ask Parliament to set up a Joint Committee to undertake a review to look at codifying the key conventions of the Lords and developing alternative forms of scrutiny that complement rather than replicate those of the Commons; the review should also explore how the upper chamber might offer a better route for public engagement in scrutiny and policy making. We also said we would legislate to place reasonable limits on the time bills spend in the second chamber—no longer than 60 sitting days for most bills.

Immigration Tribunal

Harry Cohen: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will take steps to ensure that the presentation of judgments in Immigration Appeals Tribunal cases is such that, when it determines that an application has no merit, the basis on which the Tribunal has considered the case as having no merit and the fact that the determination does not necessarily reflect the merits that the case may have but which fall outside the Tribunal's remit, are made clear; and if she will make a statement. [2069]

Bridget Prentice: The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) succeeded the Immigration Appellate Authority on 4 April 2005. The AIT procedure rules (SI No. 230 (L1.)) make provision that parties to an appeal hearing must be served with a written determination containing the appeal decision and the reasons for it. Similarly, where the AIT determines an application to reconsider the original Tribunal decision, the rules provide that the reasons for the decision, which may be in summary form, must be served in written form upon the parties to the appeal. Beyond these provisions, the approach as to form and content of determinations is a matter for the Tribunal judiciary.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the current backlog of cases at the Immigration Tribunal is. [1804]

Bridget Prentice: The latest provisional information shows that at the end of March 2005 the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA) had the following outstanding work: 25,304 Adjudicator appeals, 5,217 applications for permission to appeal to the Immigration Appeals Tribunal (IAT) and 4,783 substantive IAT appeal hearings. This covers all asylum and immigration work, including family visitor visas. There has been no backlog at the Adjudicator tier though there have been delays at the permission application and substantive appeal stages of the IAT. It is provisionally estimated that 2,000 IAT appeals were affected by these delays and could be classified as backlogged. On 4 April 2005 the commencement of section 26 of "The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004" introduced a unified appeals system under the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT). All outstanding work from the IAA and the IAT has been transferred to an equivalent appeal stage within the AIT.

Judicial Appointments

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what appointment procedure will be used to appoint the next Lord Chief Justice. [1765]

Ms Harman: There is currently no vacancy in the office of Lord Chief Justice. If in the future a vacancy does occur, the procedure will be that my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor will advise the Prime Minister who will make a recommendation to Her Majesty. Once the Queen has approved the appointment, this will be announced by No. 10 Downing street.

Legal Aid

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how many legal aid firms she has visited since her appointment; [1802]

(2) what plans she has to visit a law centre. [1803]

Bridget Prentice: I have not had the opportunity to visit a legal aid firm or a law centre, since my appointment on 9 May. I do however, intend to do so in the near future.

North East Regional Assembly Referendum

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what reports the Department has received from the Electoral Commission on the conduct of the north east regional assembly referendum; and if she will make a statement. [1223]

Ms Harman: There have been none as yet. However, under section 5 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 the Electoral Commission has a statutory duty to prepare and publish a report on the administration of the referendum. I understand that the Commission proposes to do so in the autumn of this year.

Postal Voting

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* confirmed instances, *(b)* allegations and *(c)* estimates of (i) postal votes being delivered to the wrong address, (ii) postal votes being delivered that had not been applied for, (iii) postal votes not being delivered that had been applied for, (iv) postal votes not being delivered in time for them to be returned, (v) postal votes being delivered in the wrong envelopes, (vi) people receiving both postal votes and polling cards, (vii) people receiving more than one postal vote and (viii) applications for postal votes for people being made at an address where they do not live and that they do not use for correspondence have been reported to the Department for each parliamentary constituency in relation to the 2005 general election. [411]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Commission, under Section 5 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, has a statutory duty to report on the administration of all parliamentary general elections. Information about postal votes will be included in the Electoral Commission's report on participation and turnout at the 2005 general election, to be released later in the summer. The Government do not collect centrally the information requested.

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether recorders may be ticketed to try rape. [587]

Ms Harman: Yes.

Voting System

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans the Government have to change the voting system. [1153]

Ms Harman: The Government remain committed to their manifesto commitment to reviewing the experience of the new electoral systems—introduced in the devolved administrations, the European Parliament and the London Assembly. The Government have no plans to change the voting system.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will commission a review of the conduct of voting in the last general election. [1154]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Commission has a statutory duty to report on the administration of UK parliamentary elections. The Commission has already published its report 'Securing the vote' on 20 May 2005, including reporting on the administration of the general election 2005. Further reporting will follow in the coming months. In addition, The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, will also be publishing a report based upon the findings of their assessment team who were invited by the Government to observe the election. They indicated before the election that their report should be published between four to eight weeks after the election.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Academic Attainment

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action is being taken by his Department to close the gap between those achieving the highest and lowest levels of academic attainment in Northern Ireland. [2230]

Angela E. Smith: Promoting improvement and reducing differentials in attainment are supported through a range of measures, including:

the continued recognition of social deprivation and education underachievement in the formula used to determine schools' budgets. £48 million has been allocated to schools in 2005–06 under this element of the formula;

the School Improvement Programme launched in 1998, which is focused on tackling under-achievement in education;

the Education Action Zone initiative, which is aimed at schools in the most challenging circumstances through community capacity-building;

the Key Stage 4 Flexibility Initiative, which allows schools to discontinue certain aspects of the statutory curriculum in favour of innovative work-related programmes;

the implementation of the new post-primary arrangements which will provide all pupils with access to a much wider range of courses, including vocational courses, regardless of where they live or the school they attend.

This was highlighted in the Chief Inspector's report published on 24 May and my Department will continue to give this important issue the attention it deserves. I would also expect schools and support agencies to consider appropriate actions and interventions on the ground.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consultations took place between his Department and the Equality Commission before the introduction of ASBOs in Northern Ireland. [2168]

Mr. Hanson: In January 2004 the Northern Ireland Office launched a public consultation, lasting 13 weeks, to establish measures that would best address the issue of antisocial behaviour in Northern Ireland. On 10 May 2004, a further public consultation lasting five weeks was launched on the draft Order in Council, proposing new legislation to introduce antisocial behaviour orders as a statutory measure. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland responded to both consultations.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the recent assessment by the Northern Ireland Equality Commission of the legality of the use of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBO) in Northern Ireland. [2265]

Mr. Hanson: On 9 May 2005 the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland issued the report of its investigation of a formal complaint made by the Children's Law Centre under paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Government is presently considering the Commission's findings and recommendations.

Asthma

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will explain what steps he will take to ensure that the Asthma Charter is put into practice so that the health and wellbeing of people with asthma in Northern Ireland is improved. [1892]

Mr. Woodward: The Asthma Charter, which has been produced by Asthma UK, outlines the standards of care that people with asthma should expect and aims to ensure that they get the right treatment and support to control their asthma. Asthma UK has subsequently produced an information pack, which aims to help professionals improve care for patients and helps patients monitor and control their condition. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has agreed to provide the funding to produce and distribute the information packs to all patients with asthma in Northern Ireland through their GP practice.

Children (Secure Accommodation)

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many places in secure accommodation are available for children at risk in Northern Ireland; what estimate he has made of the requirement for such places; and if he will make a statement. [1982]

Mr. Woodward: There are currently 15 secure accommodation places at the regional secure care facility at Lakewood centre in Bangor, an increase of seven beds since 2001. Work is currently under way on building a replacement facility which is due to open in 2006 increasing the number of regional places to 16. In addition, under the terms of the legislation governing the use of secure care Health and Social Services Trusts can secure children at other locations, including statutory children's homes. The potential total number of secure places is therefore not limited by the number of places available at the regional unit.

The strategic aim of the Department is to provide a diverse range of provision suited to meet the needs of children in care. In addition to building a replacement regional secure unit, existing intensive support provision will be replaced and extended throughout Northern Ireland. This will provide 11 additional places and 55 replacement beds, alongside an additional eight beds in a regional Social, Emotional and Psychological unit. It is intended that these expanded services will divert children from secure accommodation into accommodation better suited to meet their needs.

The number of places at this regional secure facility, as well as the planned expansion of intensive support and other specialist places is based on the level of need identified by the four Health and Social Services Boards to the Children Matter Task Force which is led by the Department. Under the auspices of the Task Force an additional 86 beds and 47 replacement beds have already been provided. At the end of Phase II, a further 43 additional and 159 replacement beds will have been provided.

Civil Service

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether it is the policy of the Northern Ireland Civil Service to ensure a neutral working environment. [2003]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Civil Service's Equal Opportunities Policy Statement asserts that

> "Everyone has a right to equality of opportunity and to a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere in which all workers are encouraged to apply their diverse talents and in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated."

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether it is the policy of the Northern Ireland Civil Service to promote equality of opportunity in the awarding of public contracts. [2006]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy, which was agreed by the Assembly in May 2002, requires all public sector organisations to include an Equality Clause in all contracts and a standard clause was agreed for inclusion in all public sector contract documentation from July 2004.

In particular, the clause places a mandatory requirement on contractors in relation to fair employment and anti-discrimination legislation. The clause also requires the contractor to use his best endeavours to ensure that in his employment policies and practices and in the delivery of the contract there shall be no unjustifiable inequality of treatment of the categories listed in section 75.

The inclusion of this clause is in fulfilment of the obligation on public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in carrying out their functions.

Crime

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the clear-up rate was for *(a)* domestic burglaries, *(b)* vehicle crimes and *(c)* assaults in (i) North Belfast and (ii) Northern Ireland in each year since 2001. [1981]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is set out in the following table.

Clearance rates recorded by the police

Percentage

Offence type	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Northern Ireland				
Domestic burglary	9.7	9.7	11.1	13.4
Vehicle crime	6.3	7.5	9.3	10.1
Assault	44.6	49.0	55.8	50.8
North Belfast District Command Unit				
Domestic burglary	6.0	9.9	10.5	10.4
Vehicle crime	4.2	5.9	5.0	6.2
Assault	18.6	34.9	46.6	40.5

Diabetes

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the impact of the extension of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 introduced in October 2004 on addressing the needs of children with diabetes in Northern Ireland schools; and what guidance the Department of Education for Northern Ireland has issued to schools, teachers and parents regarding children with diabetes attending school trips. [1413]

Angela E. Smith: My Department issued comprehensive guidance to schools in 2002 on the health and safety of pupils on educational visits. The document contains detailed advice regarding pupils with medical needs, including children with diabetes.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 does not apply to the provision of education in Northern Ireland. However, from 1 September 2005, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 will be in operation in Northern Ireland. This law will prohibit discrimination on grounds of disability in education and will require schools and General Qualifications Bodies to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children and young people with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to those without disabilities. These duties cover all aspects of school life, including school clubs and trips. Type 1 diabetes would be considered a disability under this legislation.

The Departments have tasked the Equality Commission (Northern Ireland) with producing Codes of Practice and other guidance materials to support the disability discrimination aspects of the Order for schools and Further and Higher education institutions.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Department of Education for Northern Ireland's plans to support children with type 1 diabetes in schools; and what resources have been allocated to meeting the needs of such children. [1414]

Angela E. Smith: Diabetes is a medical condition and as such teachers are dependent on medical professionals for identification, diagnosis and support.

Once a school has been made aware of a pupil with this condition, the school's medical support team is contacted and medical staff give training for individual teachers, where it is deemed appropriate. Specific advice and guidance on the support required for pupils with type 1 diabetes in schools is dependent on medical advice from a Health and Social Services Trust's community paediatrician which enables provision of support and interventions, as appropriate.

In addition the Education and Library Boards and Health and Social Services Trusts circulate advice and guidance to schools on the most common medical conditions e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma.

The Department of Education will, in the near future, be issuing guidance to schools on how to support pupils with medical needs.

From 1 September 2005, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 will be in operation in Northern Ireland. This law will prohibit discrimination on grounds of disability in education and will require schools and general qualifications bodies to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children and young people with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to those without disabilities. Type 1 diabetes would be considered a disability under this legislation.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on each Health and Social Services Board area's plans for a structural patient education programme for people with diabetes; and what funding has been allocated for each programme. [1415]

Mr. Woodward: Education for people with diabetes, to support them in managing their condition and help them to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle, was identified as a priority area for development by the CREST Taskforce. In 2004–05 the Department allocated an additional £1 million for the development of services for people with diabetes and as a result a number of additional specialist staff have been appointed and these staff have an educational role as part of their overall professional responsibilities.

There are a number of educational programme initiatives under way in Health and Social Services Board areas in hospitals and in the community. The Regional Diabetes Steering Group, set up to oversee the implementation of the recommendations made by the taskforce, will be considering what further action needs to be taken to further develop structural education programmes for people with diabetes throughout Northern Ireland.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many families in Northern Ireland have benefited from the abolition of the means-testing of parents of disabled children as part of the disabled facilities grants process since the abolition took place. [2272]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is not currently available. However since the abolition of the means test came into effect on 16 February 2004 the Housing Executive has approved 61 applications for disabled facilities grant in respect of children. The Housing Executive will be undertaking research to determine how many of these would likely have benefited from the abolition.

Education Funding

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action is being taken by the Department to review funding levels in the education system. [2010]

Angela E. Smith: I met Education and Library Board chairs and chief executives on 26 May, and listened carefully to the concerns they expressed about the funding position. I have also visited a number of schools to see the position. I advised boards of the importance I attach to sound financial management to ensure that the maximum possible resources are provided for front line services. In that context I stressed the need for further development of collaborative working and shared services across boards and have reiterated my predecessor's commitment to make available initial funding of £0.5 million per board in 2005–06 to facilitate this. I await proposals from boards.

Emergency Services (Attacks)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many attacks there have been on the emergency services in Northern Ireland, broken down by service, in each of the past 12 months; and *(a)* how many people have been successfully prosecuted for carrying out these attacks and *(b)* how many prosecutions are ongoing. [2269]

Mr. Woodward: The number of attacks on fire services, as recorded by the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland, is set out in the following table.

Fire

	Attacks on fire fighters				
	Damage to appliance	*Damage to appliance and injury to personnel*	*Injury only*	*Hostile crowd*	*Total*
2004					
June	5	—	1	26	32
July	12	—	—	27	39
August	7	2	—	22	31
September	7	—	—	23	30
October	7	—	—	30	37
November	8	—	1	5	14
December	3	—	—	6	9
2005					
January	2	—	—	6	8
February	4	—	—	12	16
March	7	—	1	29	37
April	7	1	—	15	23
May	2	—	1	22	25
Total	71	3	4	223	301

Of the total of 301 incidents recorded, 223 involved a hostile crowd but no injury or damage was sustained to personnel or equipment.

The number of attacks on ambulance services, as recorded by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, is set out in the following table:

Ambulance

	Physical attacks	*Verbal attacks*	*Vehicle equipment*	*Total*
2004				
June	10	3	0	13
July	2	2	1	5
August	3	1	0	4
September	5	1	0	6
October	4	2	3	9
November	9	1	3	13
December	3	1	0	4
2005				
January	6	1	1	8
February	5	3	3	11
March	4	1	0	5
April	0	3	0	3
May	4	0	0	4
Total	55	19	11	85

Statistics in relation to the specific offence of 'assault on police', for the last 12-month period for which they are available, are as follows:

Police

	Number
2004	
April	170
May	177
June	168
July	219
August	177
September	161
October	141
November	161
December	182
2005	
January	175
February	168
March	219
Total	2,118

Some assaults on police, depending on their seriousness, may be recorded as other 'violence against the person' offences, for which a breakdown is not readily available.

Convictions

In 2003, the latest year for which statistics are available, there were 339 convictions (successful prosecutions) for the specific offence of 'assault on police'.

Victim information in relation to court proceedings is not contained within the Northern Ireland Office court datasets, unless the victim is identified within the offence title. Thus, the number of successful proceedings against other emergency services is not available. Press reports indicate that one attacker has recently been convicted for an attack on a fire fighter.

Details relating to prosecutions ongoing are held at Police District Command Unit level, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

English as an Additional Language

Mrs. Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what training will be made available at the beginning of the autumn term for teachers who will be teaching English as an Additional Language (EAL) child for the first time; whether on-going training will be provided for *(a)* other teachers and *(b)* classroom assistants in schools with EAL pupils; and whether teacher-training colleges in Northern Ireland have included EAL in the curriculum. [1226]

Angela E. Smith: The Education and Library Boards' Curriculum Advisory Support Service (CASS) provides for the teaching of English as an Additional Language (EAL) either by means of peripatetic teachers teaching the pupils or by training the teachers in schools where there is a need. CASS respond to and prioritise requests for training according to the level of funding available and they are currently in the process of preparing their training programmes for the 2005/06 academic year.

Stranmillis University College has for some years offered optional training to its BEd students in relation to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and an additional certificate is awarded to those who complete successfully the course. St. Mary's University College is currently planning for the integration of issues relating to EAL into the teacher education curriculum, offering all academic staff training in this area in the forthcoming year.

Information for classroom assistants is not held centrally. I will write to the hon. Lady with this information, and on the outcome of the Boards training programmes, as soon as possible and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Flag Flying

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he intends to ban the flying of *(a)* sectarian and *(b)* national flags from public property. [516]

Angela E. Smith: There are no plans to introduce new or amending legislation to deal with the flying of sectarian flags or national flags from public property.

Glaucoma

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to raise awareness of glaucoma in Northern Ireland; and how many people in Northern Ireland have suffered blindness as a result of glaucoma in each of the past five years. [2182]

Mr. Woodward: Information on instances where glaucoma has led to blindness is not held centrally. No specific campaigns have been undertaken but information on glaucoma is available from a number of sources, including the Royal National Institute for the Blind, the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and the International Glaucoma Association.

Health Care Trusts

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many procedures were cancelled in each health trust in the Province in each of the last five years. [1438]

Mr. Woodward: This information is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

High Hedges

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to consult on the introduction of legislation in Northern Ireland to deal with problems associated with high hedges. [1452]

Angela E. Smith: A consultation paper will be published in September 2005 to collect information about the scale of the nuisance high hedge problem in Northern Ireland. This will enable the Department to produce a regulatory impact assessment, and providing it supports a legislative solution, a policy consultation paper is expected to issue before Christmas seeking views on proposed legislation.

HIV/AIDS

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland were diagnosed as being HIV positive *(a)* to date in 2005, *(b)* in 2000, *(c)* in 1995 and *(d)* in 1990. [2229]

Mr. Woodward: The number of people who had a diagnosis of HIV positive in Northern Ireland are as follows:

(a) None to date in 2005,

(b) 19 in 2000,

(c) 12 in 1995 and

(d) 12 in 1990.

Please note that the figure for 2005 is provisional and is liable to change as further reports for this period are received.

Home Ownership

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the adult population in Northern Ireland own their own homes; and what the equivalent figures were for each of the last five years. [2189]

Mr. Hanson: It is not possible to supply figures for the number of adults involved, but the following table shows the approximate percentage of households that are either 'owned outright' or 'owned with mortgage' between 1998–99 and 2003–04.

Households in owner occupation

	Percentage
1998–99	68
1999–2000	67
2000–01	69
2001–02	72
2002–03	72
2003–04	73

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent steps have been taken by his Department to help first-time home buyers in Northern Ireland. [2191]

Mr. Hanson: The Co-ownership scheme, which has been in operation in Northern Ireland since 1978, offers first time buyers on marginal incomes, who would not be eligible to obtain a full mortgage, the opportunity to become home owners on an equity sharing part mortgage/part rent basis.

In recognition of the success of the scheme which has, since its inception in 1978 assisted almost 18,000 participants into home ownership, the Department has recently increased its funding level by £23 million over the next three years to provide almost £39 million over the period. This, together with funding of almost £60 million which will be provided by the Northern Ireland Co-ownership Housing Association (NICHA), which operates the scheme on the Department's behalf, will help support around 2,400 applicants over the period. The eligibility rules have also recently been amended to make the scheme more reflective of house prices in the starter home end of the market.

The social housing house sales scheme also makes an important contribution in providing an opportunity for those in the social rented sector to become home owners. The scheme has recently been extended to housing association tenants.

Hospital Consultants

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what incentives are being provided to attract hospital consultants in Great Britain to work in the Province. [1405]

Mr. Woodward: There are no incentives specifically offered to attract hospital consultants from Great Britain to take up appointment in the Health and Personal Social Services in Northern Ireland. However, Health and Personal Social Services employers may offer assistance with "reasonable" removal expenses to any hospital consultant relocating to Northern Ireland.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how he expects front line hospital services to be affected as a result of his Department's proposal to reduce overtime by hospital consultants in Northern Ireland. [2261]

Mr. Woodward: I do not expect frontline services to be affected by the reduction in additional activity being funded by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in 2005–06. The reduction equates to a 4.5 per cent. increase in consultant productivity which is not an unreasonable expectation given the high level of investment placed in the new consultant contract.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the British Medical Association and other interested parties in relation to his Department's proposal to cut overtime by hospital consultants in Northern Ireland. [2262]

Mr. Woodward: Both the BMA and the Department negotiated the terms of the new contract for consultants. It seeks to introduce more efficient use of consultants' time and, in particular, an increase in the time spent on direct clinical care. There have not been any discussions specifically relating to overtime.

Intensive Care Beds

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of hospital beds within each health trust in the Province are *(a)* intensive care and *(b)* high dependency unit beds. [1437]

Mr. Woodward: Intensive Care and High Dependency Unit Beds form part of the service supplied in the acute sector of care. The number of Intensive Care Beds (ICU) and High Dependency Unit Beds (HDU) in each Health Trust is shown in the following table, as a percentage of all acute beds in the Trust.

Health and Social Services (HSS) Trust	*Percentage ICU Beds*	*Percentage HDU Beds*
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	0.9	0.7
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	0.0	1.0
Mater Infirmorum HSS Trust	2.0	1.0
The Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	3.2	1.1
Ulster Community and Hospitals HSS Trust	1.4	0.9
Causeway HSS Trust	1.4	1.4
United Hospitals HSS Trust	1.3	1.5
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	1.5	0.5
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	0.0	2.6
Altnagelvin Area Hospital HSS Trust	1.2	1.2
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	1.4	2.9
Northern Ireland	1.5	1.1

Figures are representative of the position at 1 April 2005.

In addition to those beds included in the table, there are a number of critical care beds held for a specific purpose.

14 post-operative High Dependency unit beds are situated at Greenpark HSS Trust

8 Intensive Care and 6 High Dependency unit beds are situated in the Royal Victoria Hospital in the Cardiac Surgery specialty

Local Community Fund

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria were used when allocating the recently announced £3 million from the Government's local community fund to aid the regeneration of deprived areas in Northern Ireland. [2271]

Mr. Hanson: The 48 areas to receive an allocation from the local community fund were initially announced in July 2003. The target areas were determined by applying the noble indices to identify the most deprived areas (worst 10 per cent. of wards and the worst 10 per cent. of enumeration districts not in the top 10 per cent. of wards) supplemented by the outcome of work carried out by Community Foundation for Northern Ireland to provide the focus on areas of weak community infrastructure.

Lough Neagh

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the ownership of Lough Neagh. [2195]

Angela E. Smith: The bed and soil of Lough Neagh, and fringing lands accreted as a result of the lowering of the water level in 1959, are owned by the Shaftesbury Estate of Lough Neagh Ltd.

This ownership includes shooting rights, mineral rights to extract sand and gravel, and rights to charge for laying moorings and building jetties.

The Estate does not claim to own navigation rights or to own the water itself.

MOT Tests

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he is taking to reduce the waiting time for MOT testing at driver and vehicle test centres in Northern Ireland. [2225]

Angela E. Smith: The Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency is working to restore normal services as soon as possible and is now carrying out more vehicle tests than applications received each week. The action being taken includes maximising available resources at test centres, use of overtime working, redeployment of staff and the recruitment of additional vehicle examiners. Certificates of temporary exemption, which allow vehicles to be taxed and driven legally until they can be tested, continue to be issued where appointments cannot be offered within 21 days.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the current average waiting time is for MOT inspections in each vehicle testing agency site in Northern Ireland. [2226]

Angela E. Smith: The following table shows the average waiting times for vehicle tests, including MOT inspections, in each vehicle testing agency site in Northern Ireland for week ending 21 May 2005.

Test centre	*Average waiting time in weeks*
Armagh	6
Ballymena	7
Belfast	4
Coleraine	9
Cookstown	8
Craigavon	6
Downpatrick	5
Enniskillen	10
Larne	5
Lisburn	7
Mallusk	5
Londonderry	10
Newry	7
Newtownards	4
Omagh	13

The overall average waiting time for all vehicle test categories is seven weeks.

MRI Scans

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which hospital trusts have bought MRI services from other trusts in each of the last five years. [1419]

Mr. Woodward: The table lists those Health and Social Services Trusts, which bought MRI services from other trusts in the last five years, indicating the years in which they bought services and the trusts they bought from.

Health and Social Services trust	*Years in which the trust bought MRI services from another trust*	*Trust from which they bought MRI services*
Causeway	2004–05	Altnagelvin; Green Park Healthcare
Down Lisburn	2000–01 to 2004–05	Royal Group of Hospitals
Green Park Healthcare	[1]2003–04 to 2004–05	Royal Group of Hospitals
Mater	2000–01 to 2004–05	Royal Group of Hospitals (200–01 to 2004–05); Ulster Community and Hospitals (2004–05)
Newry and Mourne	2000–01 to 2004–05	Royal Group of Hospitals

[1] Information prior to 2003–04 is not readily available.

National Stadium

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration has been given by his Department to the transport links required to serve the new National Stadium for Northern Ireland. [2227]

Mr. Hanson: No final decision has been made on the proposed Multi-Sports Stadium for Northern Ireland. The position remains, as the Government announced in March, that work is continuing on the viability of the Stadium, particularly in relation to getting agreement on the way forward with the sporting bodies, and that Maze/Long Kesh is the only site being considered. Master planning work, which will include an assessment of public and private transport needs, is already under way for that site.

NHS Staff

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many days were lost through sickness of NHS staff in the Province in each of the last three years, broken down by profession. [1410]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is set out in the following tables.

Staff group	*Days lost 2002–03*	*Days lost 2003–04*	*Days lost 2004–05*
TC2 Administrative and Clerical	121,890	116,746.8	125,528.06
TC3 Works and Maintenance	94,064	10,733.6	9,539.6
TC4 Ancillary and General	140,080.3	142,630.5	146,064.2
TC5 Nursing and Midwifery	270,001.8	264,628.4	274,197.3
TC6 Social Work Staff	81,778.2	90,217.2	90,742.8
TC7 Professional and Technical	53,320.5	53,808	55,283.1
TC8 Medical and Dental	8,706.8	8915	9,079.3

The Eastern Health and Social Services Board and the Mater Hospital Health and Social Services Trust were unable to provide the information due to technical difficulties with their computer systems, and therefore have not been included in the above table.

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Services Trust were unable to furnish detailed breakdowns of the figures from 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 and 1 April 2003 to 30 September 2003. This was due to the methodology of recording absences at the time. The information is available from October 2003, shown in the following table. In addition the term "Others" include Administrative and Clerical staff (TC2), Ancillary and General (TC4) and Medical Staff (TC8).

Staff group	*Days lost 1 October 2003 to 31 March 2004*	*Days lost 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005*
TC9 Emergency Personnel	5,355.12	7,583.9
TC9 Non-Emergency Personnel	1,030.14	2,708.57
TC9 Control	716.93	887
TC2, 4 and 8 Others	1045.04	876.58

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many doctors are employed in non-standard or trust grade posts in each NHS trust in Northern Ireland. [1606]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Non-standard/trust grade posts by NHS trust

	Headcount	*WTE*
Altnagelvin	5	5.0
Armagh and Dungannon	0	0.0
Belfast City Hospital	0	0.0
Causeway	0	0.0
Craigavon and Banbridge	0	0.0
Craigavon Area Hospitals	5	5.0
Down Lisburn	5	5.0
Foyle	0	0.0
Green Park	0	0.0
Homefirst	0	0.0
Mater Hospital	3	3.0
Newry and Mourne	1	1.0
NI Ambulance Service	0	0.0
North and West Belfast	0	0.0
Royal Group of Hospitals	0	0.0
South and East Belfast	0	0.0
Sperrin Lakeland	2	2.0
Ulster Community and Hospitals	5	5.0
United Hospitals	10	10.0
Total	36	36.0

Northern Ireland Police Fund

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been warned about their security as a result of the ongoing investigation into alleged criminal and terrorist activities by two members of staff at the Northern Ireland Police Fund. [1450]

Mr. Woodward: I have been informed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland that no persons have been warned about their personal security as a result of the now completed investigation into this matter.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in the investigation into alleged criminal and terrorist activities by two members of staff at the Northern Ireland police fund; and if he will make a statement. [1451]

Mr. Woodward: I have been informed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) that following a PSNI investigation the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) directed that two individuals should be prosecuted for a number of dishonesty offences. The DPP subsequently withdrew the charges.

No terrorist offences were uncovered as a result of the PSNI investigation.

Paramilitary Violence

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many paramilitary-style attacks were carried out in each month of 2005; how many of these can be attributable to *(a)* Loyalist and *(b)* Republican paramilitaries; and how many people have been prosecuted as a result. [2193]

Mr. Woodward: The following table shows the type and number of paramilitary-style attacks for the period January to April 2005.

Paramilitary attacks and assaults January to April 2005

	Casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults			*Casualties as a result of paramilitary style shootings*		
2005	*By Loyalists*	*By Republicans*	*Total*	*By Loyalists*	*By Republicans*	*Total*
January	5	4	9	4	4	8
February	5	6	11	7	1	8
March	5	5	10	4	—	4
April	3	3	6	5	2	7
Total	18	18	36	20	7	27

Notes:

1. PSNI does not hold statistics relating to prosecutions in these matters as they are not in themselves specific criminal offences, more a description of attacks. The specific offences for which a person may be charged are many and varied.
2. Attribution is as perceived by the PSNI based on the information available and does not necessarily indicate the involvement of a paramilitary organisation.
3. April 2005 statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment. No statistics are available yet for May.

Prostate Cancer

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent steps he has taken to raise awareness of prostate cancer among men in Northern Ireland; and how many men were diagnosed with prostate cancer in each of the past three years. [2231]

Mr. Woodward: Through the Northern Ireland Cancer Forum the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has been working with cancer charities such as Action Cancer and Men Against Cancer to raise awareness of prostate cancer. In addition the 2003 Report of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) contained a section on prostate cancer, including particular information about the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test. A copy of the 2003 Report was issued on a given day last year with every copy of each of the three major Northern Ireland newspapers. The CMO's 2004 Report also carried similar information on these matters and added a website address where further details could be obtained.

The number of men diagnosed with prostate cancer in each of the last three years for which figures are available are as follows:

	Number
2000	569
2001	531
2002[1]	631

[1] There is a period of 18 months approximately before incidence figures are published for any given year. The official figure for 2003 will be available at the end of June 2005.

Race Hate Crimes

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the steps he is taking to tackle race hate crime in Northern Ireland. [2183]

Mr. Hanson: The Government along with the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland abhors hate crime in all its manifestations and is taking positive and practical steps to tackle this. In particular the Government are currently considering its response to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee's report entitled the "Challenge of Diversity—Hate Crime in Northern Ireland".

The Government have already introduced the Criminal Justice (No.2) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 which directs the courts to take account during sentencing of any offence where there is evidence of hostility based on religion, race disability or sexual orientation. In addition the legislation increases the maximum sentences available for certain specified, mainly violent offences including where racial, religious or sexual aggravation is proven.

Work is concluding on the development of the Racial Equality strategy, which will provide a framework for practical and protective measures to tackle hate crime and the causes of hate crime. This will be a joined-up strategy involving every part of Government working together to address this most serious issue. One of the practical outcomes of this will be the provision of additional support for the victims of this type of crime and taking forward work to have better information about hate crime incidents so that resources can be targeted to address them.

Finally, the police are investing considerable time and effort in addressing race crime. Recent initiatives include the introduction of an on-line reporting system on the PSNI website as part of the "Hate Crime is Wrong campaign". The Police Service is determined to fully investigate all hate related incidents and where possible to secure sufficient evidence to prosecute offenders.

Renewable Energy

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent consultations have been carried out by his Department in relation to the development of renewable energy sources, particularly *(a)* wind, *(b)* water and *(c)* nuclear energy, in Northern Ireland. [2198]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment issued a general consultation paper on all renewable energy sources entitled "Realising the Potential", in October 2001. This was followed up, during 2004, with a series of two consultations relating to the introduction of the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation which is aimed at incentivisng the overall development of renewables in NI.

There has been no consultation on nuclear energy in Northern Ireland.

Security Guards (Crown Insignia)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the composition by community background of security guards whose uniforms bear Crown insignia was on the latest date for which figures are available. [617]

Angela E. Smith: The composition of permanent NICS and NIO staff employed in support grades, classified as security guards, by community background as at 1 January 2005 is as follows:

Community background	*Number of staff*
Protestant	92
Catholic	12
Not determined	14
Total	118

A further 46 staff provide security guard services as a part function of their job. 67 staff in total wear uniforms bearing Crown insignia. A separate breakdown for these staff is not available.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for whom security guards on the Stormont estate with Crown insignia on their uniforms work. [618]

Angela E. Smith: Security Guards with Crown insignia on their uniforms within the Stormont Estate, work for the Northern Ireland Department of Finance and Personnel and the Northern Ireland Office.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Attendance Allowance

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action is being taken to ensure that those who may qualify for attendance allowance are aware of the availability of the benefit. [1350]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department goes to considerable lengths to publicise all benefits including attendance allowance. Information is available from all the Department's offices, from Citizen Advice Bureaux and other advice agencies and leaflets are available in Post Offices, and doctors' surgeries. In addition information and advice about attendance allowance is provided by the Benefit Enquiry Line. For people with internet access information about all benefits and how they may be claimed is on the DWP website (www.dwp.gov.uk).

The Department also undertakes a considerable amount of local outreach work and is increasingly working with partners such as Local Authority Social Services and Welfare Rights organisations who are well placed to identify people who may be entitled to attendance allowance in a targeted and personal way.

403,000 claims for attendance allowance were received in the year ending November 2004 and the number of people receiving attendance allowance has increased from 1.25 million in November 1999 to 1.4 million in November 2004, a rise of almost 13 per cent. Over this period expenditure has increased from £2.7 billion in 1998–99 to an anticipated £3.6 billion in 2004–05.

Autism

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will seek to introduce amending legislation which will ensure that children who suffer from autism are entitled to the high rate of care and mobility components of disability living allowance from the date of diagnosis. [1357]

Mrs. McGuire: Children with autism spectrum disorders are entitled to disability living allowance on the same basis as anyone else with a severe disability. They will qualify if they meet the entitlement conditions for the benefit, which depend on the effects that severe physical or mental disability have on a person's need for personal care and/or their ability to walk and not on particular disabilities or diagnoses. There are no plans to amend the legislation.

The numbers of children receiving disability living allowance as a result of the effects of autism spectrum disorders are not recorded separately, but are included in the more general category of those with 'learning difficulties'. As at 30 November 2004, over 71,000 children whose main disabling condition is recorded as learning difficulties were receiving the benefit. Of these over 30,000 were in receipt of either the highest rate care component or the higher rate mobility component, or both.

Benefit Claims

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many individuals claim both council tax benefit and disability benefit in England. [374]

Mr. Plaskitt: The most recently available information is in the table.

Council tax benefit (CTB) recipients in England also in receipt of attendance allowance (AA), disability living allowance (DLA) or a disability premium: May 2003

	Households
CTB with AA/DLA	1,124,000
CTB with a disability premium	1,145,000

Notes:

1. The figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.
2. Council tax benefit data excludes any second adult rebate cases.
3. Disability premiums included are disability premium, severe disability premium and enhanced disability premium.
4. Many households receive both AA/DLA and a disability premium, so there will be some overlap between the figures.

Source:

Housing benefit and council tax benefit management information system, annual 1 per cent. sample, taken in May 2003.

Carers Benefit

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his most recent estimate is of the amount of unclaimed carers' benefit in a year; and what plans he has to improve the uptake of that benefit. [1548]

Mrs. McGuire: Entitlement to carer's allowance depends on whether the qualifying conditions are satisfied and this can be reliably established only after a claim has been made. There are no data available which would provide an estimate of the number of carers who would meet those conditions if they claimed.

Information and advice about entitlement to carer's allowance are available from a range of outlets including social security offices, Jobcentre Plus offices, DWP and other helplines, DWP and other internet sites, local authorities, Citizens Advice and welfare benefit offices, public libraries, health clinics, doctors' surgeries and health visitors. Officials from the Department's disability and carers service also discuss carer's allowance at outreach events up and down the country.

In addition, the extensive pension credit take-up campaign, recently mounted by the Pension Service, has helped many older carers to benefit from the Government's abolition of the upper age limit on claims to carer's allowance.

The carer's allowance claim pack is kept under review and improvements are introduced on an ongoing basis. Claims can be made in writing, by phone and on-line, and can be accepted by organisations such as Age Concern and Citizens Advice as well as DWP offices.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's latest spending plans are for each year from 2005–06 to 2008–09; and if he will make a statement. [919]

Mrs. McGuire: The Departmental Report for 2004 (Cm 6221), which is available in the Library, contains the latest available information on spending plans for 2005–06. The Departmental Report for 2005 to be published in June 2005 will contain details of the spending plans for the years 2005–06 to 2007–08. The plans for 2008–09 will be published following the conclusion of the 2006 Spending Review.

Disability Living Allowance (Blind Claimants)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many blind people are claiming the lower rate mobility component of the disability living allowance. [1547]

Mrs. McGuire: As at 30 November 2004, some 52,800 people whose main disabling condition is recorded as blindness were receiving the lower rate mobility component of disability living allowance.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples

Early Retirement

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the proportion of the working age population that has taken early retirement in the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [966]

Margaret Hodge: In 2004 there were an estimated 581,000 people, on average, aged below the State Pension Age who were out of work and described themselves as currently retired. This represented 1.6 per cent. of the population aged 16 to State Pension Age.

Source:
Labour Force Survey, 2004 Spring to Winter quarters average, for Great Britain.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what payments *(a)* have been made and *(b)* are proposed to be made out of the Financial Assistance Scheme for members of the FII Group pension fund. [1016]

Mr. Timms: No payments have yet been made. We set up the body to administer the Financial Assistance Scheme in April and having completed the formal consultation on the draft regulations we will lay these before Parliament within the next few months. Payments will start to be made as soon as practicable thereafter, once the regulations are in place.

Estimates cannot be made on the proposed payment levels for members of individual schemes until we have received more detailed information, including information on what the scheme pension age is for individual members, their distance from scheme pension age as at 14 May 2004, and their individual losses in the schemes.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress his Department has made in attracting contributions to the Financial Assistance Scheme from external sources. [1017]

Mr. Timms: We have made clear to the pensions industry that we are keen for them to support the Financial Assistance Scheme either by voluntary financial contributions or assistance in kind.

We are grateful for the assistance in kind offered by the industry to date, and hope that it will further support the Government's leadership in assisting those facing the most serious losses. We believe that it has a strong interest in doing so. No direct financial contributions have yet been volunteered.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the medical reasons were for claims for incapacity benefit in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [817]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants by diagnosis group at the date as shown

	29 February 2004	*31 May 2004*	*31 August 2004*	*30 November 2004*
Claimants without any diagnosis code on the system	4,000	4,700	4,600	4,800
Certain infectious and parasitic diseases	20,500	20,100	20,200	20,000
Neoplasms	37,900	37,700	37,500	37,300
Diseases of the blood and blood forming organs and certain diseases involving the immune mechanism	4,400	4,300	4,200	4,300
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	38,500	38,300	38,500	38,300
Mental and behavioural disorders	1,020,000	1,028,300	1,035,000	1,038,700
Diseases of the nervous system	164,800	165,500	165,500	164,900
Diseases of the eye and adnexa	19,700	19,500	19,300	19,400
Diseases of the ear and mastoid process	12,300	12,400	12,100	12,300
Diseases of the circulatory system	174,200	171,100	168,300	164,900
Diseases of the respiratory system	68,400	67,400	66,400	65,500
Diseases of the digestive system	41,600	41,600	41,800	41,000
Diseases of the skin and subcutaneous system	16,000	15,800	15,500	15,600
Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue	529,500	523,200	517,800	513,500
Diseases of the genitourinary system	18,400	18,300	18,600	18,500
Pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium	4,100	4,200	4,500	4,300
Certain conditions originating in the perinatal period	—	—	—	—
Congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities	24,900	24,900	24,800	24,900
Symptoms, signs and abnormal clinical and laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	326,100	323,600	322,800	322,900
Injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	153,200	152,600	151,800	150,500
Factors influencing Health status and contact with health services	35,000	35,200	35,000	34,800
All	2,713,600	2,708,700	2,704,200	2,696,500

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Figures include all incapacity benefit (IB), severe disability allowance and IB Contributions-only cases
3. "—" denotes nil or negligible
Source:
Information Directorate 5 per cent. sample.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of Jobcentres has been converted to the Jobcentre Plus format in each year since the inception of the programme. [404]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Acting Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Tim Boswell, dated 6 June 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning what proportion of Jobcentres has been converted to the Jobcentre Plus format in each year since the inception of the programme. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Acting Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Following the introduction of the Jobcentre Plus in April 2002, the Agency has been introducing the new integrated service and modernising the estate it inherited from the former Benefits Agency and Employment Service.

The number of offices launched each year to support delivery of the new service is as follows:

2001–02	[1]56	representing 7 per cent. of completed network
2002–03	157	representing 19 per cent. of completed network
2003–04	223	representing 27 per cent. of completed network
2004–05	115	representing 14 per cent. of completed network

[1] Pathfinder offices

The rollout programme continues and will be substantially complete by Summer 2006.

I hope this is helpful.

Local Housing Allowance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what evidence his Department has collated of housing benefit recipients moving to different accommodation within the local housing allowance pilot areas. [923]

Mr. Plaskitt: The pathfinders are subject to a comprehensive, independent evaluation. Tenants' responses to the local housing allowance are one of the main streams of the evaluation.

The final evaluation report is due to be published by the end of 2006 and a series of interim evaluation reports and summaries are being published before then. The first publication that relates to the tenants' experience "Claiming Housing Benefit in the Private Rented Sector: the baseline experience of claimants in the nine Local Housing Allowance Pathfinder areas" was published in September 2004. A copy is available in the Library. The result of the next phase of the claimant stream is expected to be published in July 2005.

New Deal (FE Colleges)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on New Deal contracts in *(a)* Gloucestershire and *(b)* the UK with local further education colleges. [145]

Margaret Hodge: There are currently 483 New Deal contracts with further education colleges in the UK, including four in Gloucestershire.

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he plans to *(a)* bring forward legislation to enable and *(b)* introduce a new long-term pensions system by the end of this Parliament; and if he will make a statement. [1299]

Mr. Timms: We will formulate our plans in the light of consultation and consensus building with a wide range of interested parties.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the planned Pensions Commission Experts Conference on 21 June. [1307]

Mr. Timms: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, and I look forward to the opportunity this event presents to hear what the experts in the field have to say. It will provide valuable input to the Government's wider consensus-building programme.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had since 5 May with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on future pensions policy; and if he will make a statement. [964]

Mr. Timms: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, has regular discussions with my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer across the range of pension policy issues. The reforms we have introduced since 1997 have significantly improved retirement incomes for today's pensioners. However, changes in society mean that we cannot necessarily rely on the existing structures to provide the same outcomes as we move further into the 21st century.

The bedrock must be long-term security and stability. That is why it is important to build consensus among stakeholders, including the industry, trade unions and business. The work of the Pensions Commission, and the principles set out in our publication "Principles for reform: The national pensions debate", are crucial parts of the framework for building that consensus.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the current Public Service Agreement targets relating to housing benefit are. [1338]

Mr. Plaskitt: Our current PSA targets were published in the "Department for Work and Pensions Departmental Report 2004", which is available in the Library.

Social Fund Community Care Grants

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average Social Fund Community Care Grant award was in *(a)* England and *(b)* each region in each year since 1997–98. [527]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information is in the tables.

Social Fund Community Care Grants in England

	Average award (£)
1997–98	335
1998–99	351
1999–2000	353
2000–01	350
2001–02	350
2002–03	352
2003–04	373
2004–05	397

Social Fund Community Care Grants by Region 2004–05

Government office region	*Average award (£)*
East of England	388
East Midlands	387
London	481
North East	374
North West	370
Scotland	375
South East	401
South West	361
Wales	344
West Midlands	383
Yorkshire and Humber	387

Notes:

1. Average award sizes are based on initial expenditure and the number of initial awards.

2. Data by Government Office Region (GOR) is not available for 2002–03 or 2003–04. Prior to 2002–03 a different district structure was in use.

3. In 2004–05, a small area of the East Midlands GOR was administered for social fund purposes from a district within the North West GOR. Regional data is built up from District data. Therefore the data above for these two GORs may be slightly inaccurate.

Source:

Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH

African Union

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what financial and logistical support has been provided to the African Union in support of its plans to increase the monitoring force in Darfur to 7000. [858]

Ian Pearson: At a donors' conference in Addis Ababa for the African Union's (AU) monitoring mission in Darfur on 26 May, the UK announced that it was pledging a further £6.6 million worth of support to the mission. This is in addition to the £14 million of support made available to date, which has been used to purchase the majority of the AU's vehicles.

We are working with other donors and the AU to ensure that co-ordinated assistance is provided to the AU in support of its planned expansion and according to its needs. This is likely to include further vehicles, airlift and technical expertise.

China

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on the level of textile imports from China since January 2005; and if he will make a statement. [1870]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had no recent discussions with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Alan Johnson) on the question of textiles imports from China. Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department of Trade and Industry officials are in close contact on this issue and, as the joint FCO/DTI Minister, I am closely following developments.

The European Commission is working hard to address concerns caused by the rapid increase in Chinese textile imports into the EU, to the satisfaction of all parties. The UK is in close contact with the Commission and supporting its efforts to find a solution.

Entry Clearance

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy that interviews at British high commissions and embassies with applicants for entry clearance to the UK are tape recorded. [1531]

Dr. Howells: There are no plans to record interviews. Interviews at British high commissions and embassies with applicants for entry clearance to the UK are not recorded. Entry Clearance Officers write a full contemporaneous record of every interview.

If the applicant, sponsor or sponsor's MP requests a copy of the relevant interview notes, they are provided free of charge. Where an application has been refused a family visit entry clearance, the applicant will automatically receive a copy of the interview notes.

The interview notes are also made available to the immigration judge, if the applicant appeals against a refusal of entry clearance.

Eritrea

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Eritrea about the freedom of Christians to practise their faith. [1985]

Ian Pearson: We monitor closely action taken by the authorities against minority religious groups in Eritrea and raise the issue of religious freedom with the Eritrean Government regularly. We also work closely with our European partners to make our concerns clear. The EU

Troika, including our Ambassador in Asmara, raised religious freedom with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 May.

European Union

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the objectives of the Government's policy towards the European Union are. [1133]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 26 May 2005]:* The United Kingdom is a firmly committed and engaged member of the EU. We are proud of the strong position Britain has achieved within Europe. British membership of the EU brings jobs, trade and prosperity, boosts environmental standards and social protection and brings greater international clout. We will take on the presidency of the EU on 1 July. Like any EU presidency, we will take forward the EU's agenda from those who preceded us. We will give particular attention to Africa and climate change and work to ensure that Europe adapts to the new global economic challenge, as my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer set out in his written statement to this House on 26 May.

Madagascar

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the arrangements are for UK diplomatic representation in Madagascar; and what plans he has to change these arrangements. [2144]

Ian Pearson: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary announced on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS, we will shortly be closing the British embassy in Antananarivo, Madagascar. After the British embassy closes, relations with Madagascar will be covered from our high commission in Port Louis, Mauritius supported by an honorary consul in Antananarivo.

Military Equipment Trafficking

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by what mechanisms the new powers to control trafficking and brokering in military equipment by UK citizens will be enforced. [1395]

Dawn Primarolo: I am replying as Minister for HM Revenue and Customs who are responsible for enforcing the controls on trafficking and brokering in military equipment. Enforcement in this area is, in the main, intelligence led. HMRC will assess any information that suggests a trafficking and brokering offence has been committed in the United Kingdom, or has been committed overseas by UK citizens. Depending on their assessment, Customs will either visit the trader using their regulatory powers to inspect records and to require information or will conduct a full investigation using their powers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

Where it is necessary to gather evidence overseas, Customs will do so using applicable mutual assistance arrangements where they are in place. Where there is sufficient evidence that a UK national has committed an offence overseas, Customs could put out a warrant for his arrest on return to the UK or consider extradition.

Customs will normally seek prosecution in all cases where there has been a deliberate breach of the controls. They will review the evidence with the Revenue and Customs Prosecution Office who will advise whether there is sufficient evidence and whether prosecution is in the public interest.

Russia

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to encourage the Russian Government to promote and protect human rights; and if he will make a statement. [1031]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We are actively engaged in a bilateral human rights dialogue with the Russian Government. The latest round of talks was held in Moscow on 23 May 2005 and included discussion of the situation in Chechnya, media freedoms, prison conditions and progress on the judicial reform agenda in Russia. We also discussed opportunities for building on current co-operation through on-going project work, notably in the area of penal reform.

We are also engaged, with our European partners, in the biannual EU-Russia human rights consultations. The first session of consultations took place in Luxembourg on 1 March 2005. The next round of consultations is scheduled to take place under the UK Presidency of the EU on 8 September 2005.

In addition to this, staff at our Embassy in Moscow continue to raise our concerns with their interlocutors in the Russian government, including with official institutions in Russia that exist to protect and promote human rights.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations the Government have made to the Russian Government in relation to *(a)* Russian involvement in the Iranian atomic energy programme, *(b)* freedom of the media, *(c)* the move to a wholly party-list system for state duma elections and *(d)* ending election of regional governors; and if he will make a statement. [1032]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have an intensive dialogue with the Russians at all levels on the Iranian nuclear programme. This nuclear programme is of concern to the UK and to Russia, who fully support the E3 negotiating process and have made clear their strong opposition to Iran seeking to develop or acquire nuclear weapons.

Most recently we raised our concerns about freedom of the media during the latest round of our bilateral human rights dialogue, held in Moscow on 23 May 2005. We also voiced concerns about the freedom of the media in Russia, in unison with our European Partners, during the biannual EU-Russia human rights consultations in March this year. We plan to do so again at the next round of EU-Russia human rights consultations which are scheduled to take place on 8 September 2005 under the UK's Presidency of the EU. In addition to this, staff at our Embassy in Moscow continue to raise concerns with Russian authorities.

We are taking a close interest in intended changes to the electoral system and the impact on the democratic process in Russia. We discuss these issues regularly with the Russian authorities.

We understand President Putin's concern to ensure effective regional administration and note his recent suggestion that the winners of elections to local assemblies may in the future nominate governors to the President. Our Embassy has discussed these plans on a number of occasions with Russian authorities. We hope that all proposed changes will be implemented in accordance with President Putin's stated intention to strengthen democratic institutions in Russia.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures have been taken since the EU-Russian Summit on 10 May to agree road maps to advance collaboration on the four agreed common spaces; and if he will make a statement. [1237]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have already held bilateral discussions on the implementation of the four common spaces with the Russians as part of the preparations for our EU presidency. Russian officials are planning to visit Brussels before the summer to continue these discussions with the EU institutions.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the Government of Sudan and *(b)* the UN concerning arrests and mistreatment of internally displaced persons in Kalma Camp, Nyala. [1285]

Ian Pearson: On 20 May, violent clashes broke out between the police and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kalma IDP camp. The African Union were able quickly to restore order, but a number of IDPs were injured and at least one policeman was killed.

On 22 May, during a visit to Kalma IDP camp, our ambassador in Khartoum raised the recent incident with UN agencies, Non Governmental Organisations and the Government of Sudan. He urged the Government of Sudan to work with the AU to restore confidence between the IDPs and police to prevent a recurrence of this incident in the future.

We regularly press the Government of Sudan on the need for it to respect the human rights of IDPs and to protect its citizens. We will continue to do so.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of Sudan on the incident at Kasab Camp, north of Kutum town, north Darfur, when internally displaced persons women were fired on by Janjaweed militia. [1326]

Ian Pearson: On 11 May, Arab militias attacked a group of women from the Kasab camp North Darfur who had left the camp to collect firewood. Several women were raped, one woman was killed and two were seriously injured.

Such attacks are abhorrent and totally unacceptable. We have made, and continue to make clear to the Government of Sudan that they hold the responsibility for the security of their people, that they must rein in the militia, and that the perpetrators of these crimes must be brought to justice.

The African Union (AU) mission is increasingly co-ordinating its patrols to provide protection to women when they leave populated areas in search of food or firewood. Where this is happening we understand the number of reported attacks has decreased significantly and we are encouraging the AU to promote this practice.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Sudanese authorities concerning the encirclement by Sudanese security forces of the town of Soba Aradi and the arrest of people there. [1342]

Ian Pearson: Following the deaths of three civilians and 14 police officers in the Soba Aradi Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Khartoum, on 18 May, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) issued a statement calling on all sides to prevent any further loss of life, and urging the Government of Sudan to respect the human rights of IDPs, protect its citizens and bring those responsible to justice. A copy of the statement is available at http://www.dfid.gov.uk/news/files/pressreleases/bennsoba-sudan.asp

Following this incident, tensions in the camp remain high. Through our embassy in Khartoum we have been in regular contact with the Government of Sudan and have pressed them to investigate the incident, in consultation with the Joint (Government of Sudan—Sudan People's Liberation Movement) National Transition Team, and to take the necessary steps to prevent a recurrence in the future. We will continue to do so.

We have repeatedly made clear to the Government of Sudan that all returns and relocations must be entirely voluntary and take place in full and prior consultation with the established international monitoring mechanisms.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in Eastern Sudan; and what role the UK Government are playing in reducing tensions in that region. [1639]

Ian Pearson: Tensions in the East remain high. The main eastern opposition groups, the Beja Congress and the Free Lions, have united to form the Eastern Front. We have made clear that there can be no military solution to the problems in the East. We are pressing the Eastern Front and the Government of Sudan to show restraint and to negotiate a political settlement, aimed at bringing the East into the wider political process in Sudan, within the framework of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. To this end we are looking to fund informal consultations between the two parties.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress on implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. [1641]

Ian Pearson: The parties expect to complete work on the Interim National Constitution in time for the formation of the Government of National Unity on 9 July. Ahead of this the parties have formed the Joint National Transition Team to drive forward implementation of the wealth and power sharing protocols. The Abyei Boundaries Commission will present its report to the parties by the end of June and the Ceasefire Joint Military Commission met for the first time on 8 May to discuss security arrangements. We are pressing the parties to ensure a fully inclusive political process. To this end they have held a series of talks with both the northern and southern opposition groups.

Due to the challenging nature of implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and the limited capacity of the parties, some areas of implementation are behind schedule. We will continue to press the parties to implement the agreement and will work to support them in achieving this. To this end we have committed $546 million over the next three years to Sudan and have provided technical expertise to a number of Commissions under the CPA, including the crucial National Constitutional Review Commission. We are also working to support the Joint National Transition Team in forming the remaining Commissions established by the CPA.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what discussions he has had with his counterparts within the EU regarding support for the African Union mission in Darfur; [1687]

(2) what discussions he has had with the NATO Secretary-General regarding support for the African Union mission in Darfur. [1689]

Ian Pearson: We are in close touch with international partners in both the EU and NATO regarding support to the African Union (AU) mission in Darfur. We played a leading role in discussions on Sudan at the EU's General Affairs External Relations Council on 23 May, which reiterated the EU's support for the AU mission, and agreed to provide a substantial offer of support to the AU. At an AU hosted conference on the situation in Darfur in Addis Ababa on 26 May, both the EU and NATO offered their assistance. Approximately $200 million was pledged at this conference. Further offers of support are still being finalised. The UK announced a further £6.6 million in new funding at the conference, taking our total contribution towards the AU's operation in Darfur to more than £20 million. We will continue to work closely with both the EU and NATO to ensure that support to the AU is closely co-ordinated and complementary in responding to the needs of the AU.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the recent meeting in Addis Ababa hosted by the United Nations Secretary General to discuss Darfur. [1869]

Ian Pearson: The African Union (AU) held a high-level conference on the situation in Darfur in Addis Ababa on 26 May, co-chaired by AU Chairperson, President Konare, and UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan. Approximately $200 million of support to the AU mission was pledged at this conference and further offers of support are still being finalised. The UK announced a further £6.6 million in new funding at the conference, taking our total contribution to the AU's operations in Darfur to more than £20 million. We are working closely with our international partners to ensure that the AU's needs are met, and that international support is provided in a co-ordinated and efficient manner.

The AU Chairperson announced at the conference that the peace talks between the Government of Sudan and the rebels will reconvene in Abuja on 10 June, and that the former Organisation of African Unity Secretary General Salim Salim had been appointed as the chief mediator. A UK representative will attend the talks and offer support to the African Union mediators.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on reports that refugees from Darfur have been killed, attacked and subject to other violence in countries to which they have fled, with particular reference to those who fled to Iraq. [1327]

Ian Pearson: We understand that reprisal attacks were instigated by Sudanese refugees in several Chadian camps and towns during the week of 9–16 May. Chadian authorities and national police had arrested refugee leaders refusing to co-operate with a UN-led registration exercise to verify refugee numbers and thereby reduce excess food distributions. Refugees retaliated by clashing with Chadian security forces; several refugees were injured though no mortalities were reported. UN officials and Chadian authorities share the view that the events were triggered by a small group of individuals eager to retain private and illegitimate benefits they enjoy through inflated numbers of beneficiaries.

We have received no reports of particular targeting of refugees from Darfur in other third countries. Sudanese migrants have long resided in Iraq and in other Gulf states. Sudanese nationals in Iraq are facing the same challenges and insecurity in Iraq as other nationalities. We understand that a section of the Sudanese nationals living in Iraq have decided to move to other countries due to fears for their security.

Turkey

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what arrangements the Government, as holders of the EU's presidency, plans to make to mark the beginning of negotiations on Turkey's accession to the EU. [1898]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: In line with the 2004 December European Council Conclusions, EU Foreign Ministers are scheduled to open Turkey's accession negotiations at an inter-governmental conference in Luxembourg on 3 October.

Vietnam

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Vietnam about the *(a)* trials of (i) Reverend Quang and (ii) Mr Thach and *(b)* the imprisonment of Ms Le Thi Hony; and if he will make a statement. [1984]

Ian Pearson: We and our EU partners regularly discuss human rights issues with the Vietnamese Government. We participate in a regular EU-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue, which is attended by our Ambassador in Hanoi. The EU raised the detention and treatment of prisoners among our issues of concern at the most recent Dialogue meeting on 17 December, and will raise the issue again at the next meeting on 7 June. We also raise freedom of religion, restrictions on religious organisations, the situation of protestant groups and fair trial procedures. We have urged Vietnam to guarantee in practice the right of all religious groups to practice their faith freely in community.

The EU has raised the case of Reverend Nguyen Hong Quang and his followers, including Mr. Thach, with the Vietnamese authorities and we sought permission to attend his appeal hearing on 12 April (which was denied). We were disappointed that their sentences were upheld at this appeal hearing. We and our EU partners continue to follow developments in these cases with close interest.

The EU has also raised the case of Ms Le Thi Hong Lien, who I believe the hon. Member is referring to, with the Vietnamese authorities. We welcomed the Vietnamese Government's decision to release Ms Le Thi Hong Lien and five other prisoners of concern during the Victory Day amnesty on 30 April.

Zimbabwe

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the imprisonment of the former Member of Parliament in Zimbabwe, Mr. Roy Bennett; [1665]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of the conditions in which the former Member of Parliament in Zimbabwe, Mr. Roy Bennett; [1666]

(3) what representations the UK Government have made to *(a)* the Zimbabwean Government, *(b)* the African Commission on Human and People's Rights and *(c)* the international community concerning the imprisonment of the former Member of Parliament in Zimbabwe, Mr. Roy Bennett. [1667]

Ian Pearson: Our embassy in Harare are in contact with Roy Bennett's family and lawyers.

The recent report of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights provides graphic testimony about his detention conditions. While we do not condone the actions for which Roy Bennett was charged, we believe that the sentence he received was wholly disproportionate to his offence. The Zimbabwean Attorney-General admitted this in two concessions submitted in court last week. He added that Parliament was not properly constituted as a court of law when it heard Roy Bennett's case. We condemn the fact that the Government's Chief Legal Officer withdrew the two concessions as a result of political pressure.

The case of Roy Bennett is only part of a broader pattern of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, and the growing abuse of the legal system. We will continue to work for the restoration of human rights and the rule of law in Zimbabwe and to discuss our concerns with African and other international partners.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what information he has received on the level of political intimidation employed by Zanu PF during the March parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe; [1691]

(2) what assessment he has made of the freedom and fairness of the March parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe. [1695]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the statement my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made to the House on 5 April on the elections in Zimbabwe, *Official Report*, columns 1260–66. There was strong evidence that the official published results did not reflect the free democratic will of the Zimbabwean people. That remains our assessment. Reports by objective observers indicate that ZANU(PF) and the regime security forces employed intimidation, in addition to other malpractice, to manipulate these elections.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the prospect of achieving sustainable progress towards democracy in Zimbabwe. [1692]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the Statement my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made to the House on 5 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1260–66, that the March parliamentary elections did not reflect the free democratic will of the Zimbabwean people. The European Union and others have echoed this. We judge that no significant progress has been made towards the restoration of democracy. Mugabe has demonstrated time and again his contempt for the democratic rights of Zimbabweans. We will maintain firm international pressure until the situation there improves.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received advocating re-engagement with the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe. [1693]

Ian Pearson: We retain diplomatic relations with Zimbabwe, and through our Embassy in Harare and occasional visits by officials, continue to urge the Government of Zimbabwe to make the reforms necessary to restore normality to Zimbabwe. We are also heavily involved in the humanitarian effort to feed the people of Zimbabwe and tackle HIV. But we have received no indications that Mugabe wishes to address the underlying causes of the crisis in Zimbabwe—bad governance and bad policies—and until and unless we do, we see little point in enhanced international engagement with his regime.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on the maintenance and expansion of sanctions against the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe. [1694]

Ian Pearson: This Government believes that the European Union's current policy towards Zimbabwe, including sanctions against the Mugabe regime, is justified by that regime's failure to address EU concerns, including the abuse of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We are currently working with our Partners to update the travel ban and assets freeze list to reflect recent changes in the government and ruling party in Harare.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

John Hemming: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the maximum price is that the Government deem to be affordable for an affordable home for sale for each of the Government office regions; and what income would be needed to purchase a property at that price without external assistance. [934]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Sustainable Communities Plan launched in February 2003 began to address the problems of affordability by identifying the potential for 200,000 additional homes in London and the south east growth areas above the levels currently planned in regional planning guidance. Kate Barker's Review of housing supply reinforces the case for a step change in housing supply to improve affordability. We will respond to the recommendations in the Barker Review by the end of the year.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many affordable homes have been *(a)* started and *(b)* completed in each of the last three years in the (i) Plymouth unitary authority area, (ii) Torbay unitary authority area and (iii) Devon county council area; and how much public funding has been made available to each authority for affordable housing projects in each of the last three years; [941]

(2) how many affordable homes have been *(a)* started and *(b)* completed in each of the last three years in (i) the Plymouth unitary authority area, (ii) the Torbay unitary authority area and (ii) the Devon county council area; and how much public funding has been made available to each for affordable housing projects in each of the last three years. [1552]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows figures for Plymouth, Torbay and Devon county council on *(a)* affordable homes provided, *(b)* affordable homes started and *(c)* how much public funding has been made available to each of the above public authorities for affordable housing projects. Figures are provided for the last three years except for starts on site which are only available for 2004–05.

	Plymouth	*Torbay*	*Devon CC*[1]
2002–03			
Total funding (£ million)	4.654	2.136	17.928
Affordable homes provided (units)	281	39	830
2003–04			
Total funding (£ million)	8.807	3.950	23.574
Affordable homes provided (units)	79	87	279
2004–05			
Total funding (£ million)	6.203	1.730	12.473
Affordable homes provided (units)	138	50	450
Starts-on-site (units)	141	80	377

[1] Devon county council excludes Plymouth and Torbay unitary authorities.

Source:

Housing Corporation (figures are based on sponsoring local authorities)

The table includes new build dwellings, acquisitions and refurbishments for both rent and low cost home ownership schemes through both the Approved Development Programme and Transitional Local Authority Social Housing Grant (TLASHG). The completion figures include units completed under TLASHG by with debt authorities, however spend on these schemes are not included in the funding figures.

Funding and completions are not directly comparable, as funding will relate to projects running, not necessarily units completed, in any one year.

Business Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much revenue has been raised in business rates in England in each year since 1997; and what the estimated receipts are for 2005–06. [1112]

Mr. Woolas: The combined total yield from local, central and crown lists is as follows:

—	*£ million*
1997–98	12,806
1998–99	12,896
1999–2000	13,320
2000–01	13,754
2001–02	15,312
2002–03	15,537
2003–04	15,323
2004–05	16,214
2005–06	17,000

The figures for 2004–05 are provisional and the figures for 2005–06 are based on rounded initial estimates from billing authorities.

Cabinet Committees

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what Cabinet *(a)* sub-committees, *(b)* committees and *(c)* working groups he sits on. [353]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement on Cabinet Committees made by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 24 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 12WS.

Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made towards the implementation of the provisions of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002; and on what date he expects the regulations to come into force. [1863]

Yvette Cooper: The Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 received Royal Assent in May 2002. Most of the provisions have now been introduced through a series of commencement orders.

The first phase of leasehold reforms came into effect on 26 July 2002, with the second phase coming into effect in two parts on 30 September and

31 October 2003. These measures included: a relaxation of the qualifying rules to make it easier to buy the freehold or a new lease; a new no fault 'Right to Manage' provisions for leaseholders of flats to take over management of their block where they do not wish to or cannot afford to buy the freehold; and new procedures for consultation on service charges.

A further commencement order brought into effect the provisions in Part 1 of the Act relating to Commonhold, on 27 September 2004. Commonhold is a new form of tenure for blocks of flats and other multi-unit properties, under which occupiers would own their units outright, and through a commonhold association own and mange the common parts collectively.

Finally, another phase of the leasehold reforms was brought into effect on 28 February 2005. This provides leaseholders with better protection against forfeiture, and requires landlords to send a written demand for ground rent before it become payable. Leaseholders of houses can also now choose their own buildings insurance.

The remaining provisions and Regulations of the Act, once enabled, would require collective enfranchisement to be exercised through an RTE company; require landlords to keep service charge monies for each group of service charge payers in separate (designated) accounts; require landlords to provide a regular (yearly) statement of account together with other relevant information; and require notices sent by landlords to tenants for administration charges to include content prescribed by Regulations. No timetable has yet been set to bring these provisions and Regulations into force.

The Welsh Assembly has devolved responsibility for secondary legislation in respect of leasehold provisions in Wales. The hon. Member may wish to write to that office in respect of the commencement orders for Wales.

Council Tax

Mr. Walker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will take steps to reduce the levels of council tax in Hertfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [786]

Mr. Woolas: It is local authorities which set their council tax although, as we said in our manifesto, we will not hesitate to use our capping powers to protect council taxpayers from excessive increases in council tax.

The Government announced their 2005–06 capping principles to the House on 23 March. These were that authorities' 2005–06 budget requirements are excessive if they show

> an increase in budget requirement of more than 6 per cent. between 2004–05 and 2005–06; and
>
> an increase in Band D council tax of more than 5½ per cent. in the same period.

No authorities in Hertfordshire have breached these principles.

John Hemming: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether one-off funding for local authorities to reduce council tax requirements will be continued in financial year 2006–07; and what assessment he has made of the effect on council tax requirements of not continuing this funding; [981]

(2) what his current estimate is of average changes in council tax for the financial year 2006–07. [980]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to supporting local authorities in delivering improvements in key public services without unacceptable council tax rises. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister worked closely with local government during the last spending review to identify pressures and burdens as well as the scope for efficiency savings, and the totals for 2006–07 and 2007–08 reflect the outcome of that work. It is imperative that councils focus on how the money available to local government is spent and improve productivity. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister believes that local authorities have demonstrated that they will make their full contribution to the local government efficiency target of £6.45 billion by 2007–08, which will provide further investment to front line service. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will continue to work closely with local government to ensure that levels of central grant are based on a realistic assessment of service commitments pressures faced by local government. Such assessment underpinned the decisions taken in Spending Review 2004 and spending plans for 2007–08 remain as set out in the Review.

The level of the council tax increase in the coming financial years will depend on local authorities' spending decisions. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will work to ensure that improved local services are deliverable within the spending plans for local government. The Government will not hesitate to use their capping powers to deal with excessive increases.

East of England Regional Assembly

Mr. Walker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will hold a referendum on the future of the east of England regional assembly; and if he will make a statement. [1126]

Yvette Cooper: The east of England regional assembly is a voluntary body of the region. Government have no powers to dissolve it or to require a referendum to be held on its future.

E-government

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the progress of local government in England in implementing e-government. [81]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Local e-Government Programme does not complete until the end of March 2006. The main target date for the e-enablement of local authority services and delivery of e-government priority outcomes is set at 31 December 2005.

On 3 February 2005, we announced the results from the 4th round of Implementing Electronic Government (IEG4) returns. These showed that councils were set to meet the 2005 target for 100 per cent. e-enablement of services.

Local authorities will be asked to complete a mid year IEG statement with a submission deadline of 18 July 2005. After 2005–06, Local e-government will be mainstreamed within the CPA assessment framework.

Fire Service

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable for the establishment of regional fire control rooms is. [1111]

Jim Fitzpatrick: We consulted stakeholders through the Practitioners Forum, and the Chairs of all English Fire and Rescue Authorities, on the accommodation criteria in December 2003, before formally beginning the procurement process with an official notice in the Journal of the European Union in April 2004, and have involved key stakeholders at every stage, including the final moderation meetings held in February and March 2005. We expect to make an announcement soon.

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many lift rescues were carried out by the Fire Service in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [2063]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of lift release incidents attended by the Fire and Rescue Service in England is set out in the following table.

	Number of incidents
1994–95	23,005
1995–96	24,446
1996–97	23,070
1997–98	24,013
1998–99	23,689
1999–2000	24,122
2000–01	24,477
2001–02	25,709
2002–03	25,326
2003–04	26,001

Source:
ODPM annual returns

Firelink Procurement Competition

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what consultation has been undertaken with *(a)* individual fire and rescue authorities, *(b)* fire brigades and *(c)* the Fire Brigades Union to ascertain their preferred solution to the Firelink procurement competition. [2147]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The specification for suppliers to compete for the Firelink contract was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders including Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, Scotland and Wales represented on the Firelink Principal Users Group and Technical Users Group. It is these representative groups that have been involved in the bid evaluation process. The Firelink Project Board, whose membership includes Fire and Rescue Authorities and the FBU, has overseen the Firelink project and will be consulted before any recommendation is made.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what evaluation has been carried out of the number of additional masts that would be required by the two bids for the Firelink procurement competition; and whether this will be taken into account in determining the outcome of the competition. [2148]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The evaluation process leading to the selection of a successful bidder for the Firelink contract will take into account any need for additional masts. Due to the ongoing nature of the competition; it is not possible to provide details of any such evaluation.

Government Offices for the Regions

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the estimated *(a)* total expenditure and *(b)* administrative costs of each Government office for the region in England in (i) 1996–97 and (ii) 2005–06. [1105]

Yvette Cooper: The information is as follows.

(a) Programme budgets administered by the Government offices (GO) are the responsibility of my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the relevant sponsor Departments. Prior to the formation of the Regional Co-ordination Unit (RCU) in 2000, details of Government office programme expenditure were not collated on a consistent basis. The RCU now compiles overall figures based on information produced for GO annual reports after the financial year has ended. The latest figures available are for 2003–04.

Programme spend managed or influenced by Government offices

2003–04	*£ billion*
North East	0.760
North West	1.541
Yorkshire and Humber	0.868
West Midlands	1.185
East Midlands	0.552
East	0.834
South East	0.742
South West	0.472
London	2.724
Totals	9.678

(b) The administrative costs of each government office for the two years in question are as follows:

£000

Government office	*1996–97*	*2005–06*
North East	8,687.15	12,250.32
North West[1]	14,189.04	17,381.83
Yorkshire and Humber	8,765.04	12,924.53
West Midlands	10,040.37	13,641.12
East Midlands	6,616.67	11,844.17
East	6,168.97	12,708.11
South East	8,406.18	14,398.28
South West	7,140.74	14,239.00
London (includes RCU admin. costs)	15,802.81	21,574.00
Total	85,816.97	130,961.36

[1] North West and Merseyside were separate regions until 1998—though the combined figures are shown under North West for 1996–97

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to facilitate the production of *(a)* regional health strategies, *(b)* regional social strategies and *(c)* regional environmental strategies in each Government Office Region. [1116]

Yvette Cooper: The Government are committed to the regional tier where it adds value to the social, environmental and economic well being of their areas. There are already a number of regional strategies which, taken together, impact positively on regional health, social and environmental issues. In our manifesto we committed to

> "devolve further responsibility to existing regional bodies in relation to planning, housing, economic development and transport"

and we shall bring forward plans to deliver this commitment.

Green Belt

Mr. Walker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much of Hertfordshire's green belt has been released for development in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [841]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 25 May 2005]:* The following table sets out the amount of development that took place in the Green Belt in Hertfordshire for each year from 1997 to 2003, a total of 312 Hectares as compared to 81 Hectares for the period 1990 to 1996. 2003 is the latest date for which figures are available. Over half of this development occurred on previously developed land, while the majority of development between 1990 and 1997 took place on previously developed land.

Change of use of green belt land to developed from 1997 to 2003 in Hertfordshire

	Hectares (figures rounded)
1997	66
1998	99
1999	35
2000	25
2001	32
2002	40
2003	15

Source:
ODPM LUCS database

Over the same period there was a net change of 50 hectares of land removed from the Green Belt in Hertfordshire, leaving a total of 83,610 hectares of Green Belt in the county as a whole. 19,300 hectares of land were added to the Green Belt in England as a whole over the same period.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what Green Belt designations the Government Offices of the Regions have consented to be *(a)* reduced and *(b)* deleted, since 1997. [1095]

Yvette Cooper: On 16 September 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published a Statistical Release entitled, "Local Planning Authority Green Belt Statistics, England 2003", which presents figures on the area of designated Green Belt in 2003. Table 2 of Annex 1 to the Release shows the recorded changes in area, including reductions, between 1997 and 2003, for regionally-listed, individual local planning authorities. No designated Green Belts were deleted during this period.

The changes to designated Green Belt boundaries have been recorded only for authorities that have adopted new development plans since 1997. The statistics do not, therefore, include changes which may have been proposed to the extent of Green Belt in provisional, draft deposit plans, and which are still going through their statutory approval process.

A copy of the Statistical Release is available in the Library of the House. It also appears on the ODPM website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_031125.hcsp

The Government expect to publish updated figures on the extent of, and changes to, the Green Belt in the autumn.

High Hedges

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what he expects will be the maximum fees chargeable by local councils to handle complaints under the high hedges provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003; and if he will make a statement. [682]

Yvette Cooper: The high hedges provisions of the 2003 Act came into effect in England on 1 June 2005. The Act allows local councils to charge a fee for determining a complaint. The Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans, at present, to use his powers to prescribe a maximum fee. Each council will be free, therefore, to charge for this service as it thinks fit.

Home Ownership

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people *(a)* owned their property outright and *(b)* were owner-occupiers with a mortgage in (i) England and (ii) the UK in each year since 1979. [1103]

Yvette Cooper: The numbers of owner-occupiers who *(a)* owned their homes outright or *(b)* were paying off a mortgage are shown in the following table for both England and the UK. Annual figures are shown from 1991 to 2004 and for selected years prior to 1991.

Thousands of households

	England		*United Kingdom*	
	Owned outright	*Buying with a mortgage*	*Owned outright*	*Buying with a mortgage*
1981	4,313	5,546	n/a	n/a
1984	4,536	6,461	5,437	7,248
1988	4,733	7,480	5,574	8,570
1991	4,779	8,331	5,662	9,673
1992	4,815	8,255	5,701	9,622
1993	4,898	8,382	5,786	9,793
1994	5,008	8,421	5,936	9,895
1995	4,998	8,468	5,927	10,002
1996	5,291	8,507	6,255	10,085
1997	5,236	8,351	6,206	9,907
1998	5,384	8,398	6,415	9,941
1999	5,563	8,458	6,618	9,998
2000	5,740	8,527	6,793	10,113
2001	5,840	8,444	6,980	10,028
2002	5,988	8,466	7,129	10,111
2003	6,133	8,441	7,312	10,104
2004	6,239	8,337	7,438	10,017

Sources:
1981: DOE Labour Force Survey Housing Trailer
1984, 1988 and 1991 to 2004: ONS Labour Force Survey

Homebuy Schemes

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many households he expects will participate each year in *(a)* Social Homebuy, *(b)* New Build Homebuy and *(c)* Open Market Homebuy. [1113]

Yvette Cooper: As announced in Homes for All (in January 2005) by 2010 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's new Homebuy proposals will help over

80,000 key workers, social tenants and other priority first time buyers to buy a share of a home on the open market or one newly built with public subsidy.

As confirmed by my right hon. Friend's the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 25 May 2005, we now propose to go even further. Following negotiations with the Council of Mortgage Lenders on the introduction of private finance to fund loan assistance, we hope to extend assistance through the first joint equity products from April 2006 to 20,000 additional households, with perhaps as many as 30,000 households, if we can extend our approach to the New Build Homebuy option also. This would enable us to assist up to 110,000 households into home ownership over the next five years.

We are currently consulting on the Social Homebuy proposal, which has not yet been introduced. Take up will depend on the details of the scheme.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what steps the Government are taking to prevent speculative buyers from taking advantage of the Social Homebuy scheme; [1189]

(2) what assessment the Government have made of the amount of housing available for first time buyers wishing to participate in the Social Homebuy scheme. [1190]

Yvette Cooper: Social Homebuy is a new option to enable tenants of housing associations and local authorities to buy a share in their rented home. Full details of the scheme are set out in our consultation document "Homebuy—expanding the opportunity to own" which was published on 1 April.

We are aware of the possible potential for exploitation and abuse. We will take this into account in finalising the details. The scheme will only be available to existing social tenants and we propose that tenants who sell within five years should repay the discount and that social landlords should have a right to buy back the property when the Social Homebuy purchaser wishes to move on.

We are currently consulting on the social Homebuy proposal, which has not yet been introduced. Take up will depend upon the details of the scheme.

The consultation period closes on 24 June and our aim is to have the scheme running by April 2006.

Homelessness

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what level of priority homelessness has had in each Government office region in England in each year since 1993. [1106]

Yvette Cooper: The number of households accepted by local authorities as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need under homelessness legislation in each Government office region during each year since 1993 is contained in the following table.

After being accepted as owed a main homelessness duty, a household will be placed in some form of accommodation. They may be placed in temporary accommodation, until a settled solution becomes available, or they may be given a settled solution straight away depending on the accommodation available to the local authority. Alternatively, if possible, the household may remain in their current accommodation. In addition to estimates of statutory homeless households, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister publishes annual estimates of the number of people sleeping rough.

Homeless households in priority need accepted[1] by local authorities, by Government office region

	England	*North East*	*North West*	*Yorkshire and the Humber*	*East Midlands*
1993	127,630	6,800	18,380	13,320	10,120
1994	118,490	6,060	17,350	11,060	8,890
1995	117,490	6,050	16,080	9,930	8,970
1996	113,590	5,780	15,500	9,240	8,900
1997	102,000	4,420	12,[illegible]00	8,940	8,070
1998	104,630	4,370	13,330	8,440	7,570
1999	105,370	4,830	12,770	8,220	7,190
2000	111,340	5,060	12,940	9,140	7,350
2001	117,830	5,490	13,440	10,330	7,240
2002	123,840	6,460	14,260	14,160	8,040
2003	135,590	8,020	17,660	16,260	9,140
2004	127,760	8,510	17,720	14,590	9,570

	West Midlands	*East of England*	*London*	*South East*	*South West*
1993	16,440	9,000	31,570	12,630	9,370
1994	15,890	8,490	28,690	12,850	9,210
1995	17,510	8,730	26,690	13,570	9,960
1996	16,240	8,670	25,730	13,700	9,830
1997	14,500	8,020	24,370	12,080	8,780
1998	14,210	8,660	26,310	12,840	8,910
1999	13,340	8,570	28,380	12,620	9,480
2000	13,660	9,420	28,230	14,420	11,170
2001	14,320	10,310	30,590	14,760	11,380
2002	14,780	10,830	28,830	14,220	12,280
2003	15,690	11,290	30,510	15,240	11,770
2004	15,080	10,680	28,050	13,460	10,100

[1] Households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in a priority need group during the year, and consequently owed a main homelessness duty by a local housing authority.

Notes:

1. Figures prior to 1997 reflect decisions under the 1985 Housing Act; decisions from 1997 were made under the 1996 Housing Act, plus residual 1985 Act cases.
2. Regional figures may not sum to England totals because of rounding

Source:

ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly)

Housing

Lynne Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which local authorities in England have decided their stock options appraisal in favour of *(a)* stock transfer, *(b)* arm's length management organisation, *(c)* private finance initiative and *(d)* stock retention by the council; how many homes each authority has in each case; which authorities have yet to advise his office of their intentions; and how many homes they own in each case. [400]

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which local authorities in England have decided their stock options appraisal in favour of *(a)* stock transfer, *(b)* arm's length management organisation, *(c)* private finance initiative and *(d)* stock retention by the council; how many homes each authority has; which authorities have yet to advise his Office of their intentions; and how many homes they own in each case. [1747]

Yvette Cooper: 73 local authorities have had stock options appraisals signed off by the relevant Government Office. The tables that show which options they have chosen have been made available in the Libraries of the House.

192 local authorities were originally subject to the requirement to have an options appraisal signed off—either for all of their stock, or part of their stock for which a solution had not already been determined. Other authorities will have chosen an option prior to the introduction of this requirement. A further four local authorities have since been deemed to require an option appraisal for all or part of their stock.

Some local authorities have opted for more than one solution for their stock and they are listed separately, with the options they have chosen, in the mixed model table. Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is never a whole stock solution, and so authorities who have chosen PFI are in this table.

Where a local authority has had an option appraisal signed off for part of its stock, but requires an appraisal for the rest, it is listed in both the table for mixed model solutions and authorities yet to have appraisals signed off.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on rent restructuring in the social rented housing sector. [1336]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister consulted on proposals last year and will announce a way forward in due course.

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether, in setting the housing targets for St. Albans *(a)* calculations of the volume of water supply available from aquifers, *(b)* the amount of water needed to supply existing and additional properties and *(c)* the impact of water extraction on local rivers, including the Ver, were (i) made and (ii) taken into account; and if he will make a statement. [1388]

Yvette Cooper: Future house building targets for St. Albans will be determined through the current review of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England. In making recommendations on the appropriate housing targets, the panel established to conduct the Examination in Public into the draft Regional Spatial Strategy will need to have regard to water supply constraints and any potential environmental impacts of supplying additional water.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many people who live within the Swale borough council area have *(a)* applied for funding and been successful, *(b)* applied and been refused funding and *(c)* applied and been put on a waiting list under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996; [1454]

(2) how much funding for housing Swale borough council has received in each financial year since the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 came into force. [1455]

Yvette Cooper: Government funding in support of Swale borough council's housing capital investment programme since 1996 has been as follows.

£000

	Supported Borrowing	*Disabled Facilities Grant*	*Private Sector Renewal Grant*	*Total*
1997–98	475	408	761	1,644
1998–99	822	203	903	1,928
1999–2000	841	223	824	1,888
2000–01	1,464	242	0	1,706
2001–02	1,270	240	0	1,510
2002–03	1,238	276	0	1,514
2003–04	987	420	0	1,407
2004–05	1,176	420	0	1,596
2005–06	1,222	412	0	1,634

From 2000–01 Government support for private sector housing renewal grants was no longer ring fenced and was included in the total for supported borrowing.

The Government do not collect centrally the number of applications for renewal grants or information on waiting lists. The number and the total value of renewal grants under the 1996 Act completed in Swale in each year since 1997 is as follows:

Private sector housing renewal assistance given in Swale (including DFGs)

	Total number of grants completed	*Total local authority expenditure on grants (£000)*
1997–98	474	1,720
1998–99	717	1,840
1999–2000	679	1,971
2000–01	309	1,138
2001–02	306	1,225
2002–03	244	851
2003–04	263	1,093

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the local authorities that have been given an extension to the deadline of July to complete their stock options process. [1746]

Yvette Cooper: No extensions have been given to the deadline of the end of July to have stock options appraisals signed off by the relevant Government Office.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the local authorities which have set up arm's length management organisations; what the performance rating of each is; and how much each has received in financial support. [1748]

Yvette Cooper: Details for the arms length management organisations (ALMOs) set up under each of the first four rounds of the programme are set out in the following tables. ALMOs do not qualify for funding until they have achieved a two or three star rating from the Housing Inspectorate. 11 of the round 4 ALMOs have yet to be inspected.

ALMO round 1 : programme announced 29 November 2001

Authority	*ALMO performance rating*	*ALMO funding allocation 2002–06 (£ million)*
Ashfield	3* Prom	53.3
Derby	3* Exc	97.1
Hounslow[1, 2]	3* Exc	99.7
Kirklees	2* Prom	149.8
Rochdale[1, 2]	2* Prom	106.3
Stockton-on-Tees[1, 2]	1* Poor	63.0
Westminster	3* Exc	74.0
Wigan	2* Prom	137.3

[1] Denotes the latest inspection result.

[2] In their initial inspections Hounslow, Rochdale and Stockton-on-Tees all achieved 2* Prom.

Note:

Early ALMOs are in the process of re-inspection

ALMO round 2 : programme announced 29 May 2002

Authority	*ALMO performance rating*	*ALMO funding allocation 2003–07 (£ million)*
Barnsley	2* Prom	141.6
Blyth Valley	2* Unc	48.3
Bolton	2* Exc	132.5
Brent	3* Exc	54.0
Carrick	3* Unc	23.0
Cheltenham	2* Prom	36.4
Colchester	2* Prom	35.6
Hillingdon	2* Prom	48.0
Kensington and Chelsea	2* Exc	43.3
Leeds : East[1]	2* Prom	14.7
Leeds : North East	2* Prom	33.8
Leeds : North West[1]	2* Prom	16.1
Leeds : South East[1]	2* Prom	10.4
Leeds : South[1]	2* Prom	22.6
Leeds : West	2* Prom	58.2
Oldham	2* Unc	86.4
Waltham Forest[2]	1* Unc	25.4

[1] Funding for 2005–07 yet to be confirmed.

[2] Now withdrawn from round 2

ALMO round 3 : programme announced 28 July 2003

Authority	*ALMO performance rating*	*ALMO funding allocation 2004–06 (£ million)*
Barnet	2* Exc	19
Easington	1* Unc	23.6
Gateshead	1* Prom	63
High Peak	2* Exc	4.7
Islington	2* Exc	24.9
Newcastle	2* Prom	64
Poole	3* Prom	17.4
Sheffield (partial)	3* Prom	49.7
Solihull	2* Prom	21
South Lakeland	2* Exc	4.2
Warrington	2* Prom	18.3

ALMO round 4 : programme announced 5 May 2004

Authority	*ALMO performance rating*	*ALMO funding allocation 2005–07 (£ million)*
Bassetlaw	n/a	18.5
Brent (partial)	3* Exc	14.0
Bury	n/a	8.6
Baling	n/a	64.0
Eastbourne	n/a	11.7
Hammersmith and Fulham	2* Exc	78.1
Manchester (partial)	n/a	17.5
Newark and Sherwood	n/a	15.5
Nottingham	n/a	28.0
Rotherham	n/a	52.5
Sandwell	n/a	62.6
Sheffield (partial)	3* Prom	70.5
Slough	n/a	11.5
Wolverhampton	n/a	42.2

Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* financial allocation and *(b)* out-turn expenditure of each of the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder areas in England was in 2004–05. [732]

Yvette Cooper: The details of the financial allocation and actual out-turn for Market Renewal Pathfinders for 2004–05 are set out in the following table:

2004–05

£ million

Pathfinder	*Allocation*	*Outturn*
Urban Living (Birmingham Sandwell)	14.850	13.649
Elevate (East Lancashire)	22.840	22.840
Hull and East Riding	2.640	2.640
Manchester Salford	44.000	44.000
Newheartlands (Merseyside)	34.350	34.350
Bridging NewcastleGateshead	28.000	28.000
Renew (North Staffordshire)	7.000	7.000
Oldham and Rochdale	17.150	17.150
Transform South Yorkshire	27.400	27.400

Local Government Finance

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what safeguards his Department *(a)* recommends to and *(b)* imposes upon local authorities to ensure probity and transparency when publicly-owned assets are sold. [1345]

Mr. Woolas: Asset management guidance for local authorities is non-statutory and sets out in broad terms features of good management of assets. It does not cover issues of probity and transparency as authorities have an obligation to ensure that financial transactions comply with the law. Ultimately questions of probity in financial transactions are a matter for the District Auditor.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* specific grants and ringfenced funding streams, *(b)* special grants and *(c)* non-ringfenced grants which the Government (i) allocated to local authorities in 2004–05 and (ii) expects to allocate in 2005–06. [1114]

Mr. Woolas: The following table lists all grants allocated to local authorities in England in 2004–05 and grants allocated so far in 2005–06 within Aggregate External Finance (AEF) in addition to Revenue Support Grant and National Non-Domestic Rates. There are other grants outside AEF but these are not provided for an authority's core services and relate, in the main, to areas of funding which are passed on by local authorities, such as Learning and Skills Council grants for adult education and sixth forms.

Amount (£ million)

Grant	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*Ringfenced*
Grants made under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003			
Excellence in Cities	260.6	355.3	No
Excellent and 3[1] Education	30.5	50.1	No
Teachers Pay Reform	0.0	908.4	No
Choice Protects	33.0	60.0	Yes
Adoption Support and Special Guardianship	23.0	32.0	Yes
Safeguarding Children	90.0	90.0	No
Teenage Pregnancy Local Implementation	32.4	32.4	Yes
Change Fund	7.0	8.0	No
Waste Re-cycling Challenge	90.0	45.0	Yes
Waste Targeted Grant	20.0	0.0	No
Waste Performance and Efficiency Pt. 1	0.0	40.0	No
Waste Performance and Efficiency Pt. 2	0.0	5.0	Yes
Fire Transitional Funding	28.3	0.0	Yes
Fire Pay Verification	0.8	0.0	Yes
New Dimension Crewing	0.0	16.0	No
LFEPA Civil Contingencies	0.0	0.6	No
Planning Delivery	130.0	116.0	No
Planning Delivery (Capital)	32.5	39.0	No
Supporting People Administration	48.1	40.0	No
Rural Bus Subsidy	51.0	53.0	No
Homelessness Strategies	45.4	42.9	No
Homelessness Strategies (Capital)	14.0	0.0	No
Private Finance Initiative	429.0	425.0	No
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	450.0	525.0	No
LPSA Reward Grant[1]	101.0	196.0	No
LPSA Reward Grant (Capital)[1]	126.0	233.0	No
Arson Control Forum	4.3	4.2	No
Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund	1.5	2.0	No
Home Fire Risk Check (Capital)	5.0	5.0	No
Grants made under other specific powers			
Standards Fund (excluding Excellent/3[1])	1,316.0	1,402.7	Yes
Sure Start General Grant	363.5	446.1	Yes
Sure Start General Grant (Capital)	40.1	306.5	Yes
Teachers' Pay Reform	825.6	0.0	Yes
Leadership Incentive	195.9	202.1	Yes
Education Action Zones	37.4	0.0	Yes
Transitional Support	121.5	60.9	Yes
School Standards	859.1	912.0	n/a
UASC Leaving Care	12.0	12.0	Yes
Carers Grant	125.0	185.0	No
Training Support	53.3	0.0	No
Improving Information Management (Capital)	25.0	25.0	Yes
National Training Strategy	31.0	87.9	No
Preserved Rights	458.3	348.2	No
Residential Allowance	409.5	214.5	No
Treatment Foster Care	3.0	3.0	Yes
Children's Trusts	3.2	3.2	Yes
Regional Development Workers	1.0	1.0	Yes
Human Resources Development Strategy	23.9	59.8	No
Access and Systems Capacity	486.0	584.0	No
Children and Adolescent Mental Health	64.0	84.8	Yes
Young People's Substance Misuse Planning	4.5	4.5	Yes
Mental Health	133.0	132.0	Yes
AIDS Support	16.5	16.5	Yes
Delayed Discharge	100.0	100.0	No
Police Grant	4,167.9	4,352.6	No
Police Grant (Capital)	270.0	272.0	No
Crime Fighting Fund	267.0	265.1	Yes
Rural Policing Fund	26.0	25.6	No
Neighbourhood Policing Fund	12.0	33.9	Yes
Occupational Health	4.7	4.0	No
Police Negotiating Board	48.0	66.0	Yes
DNA	50.0	43.6	Yes
Basic Command Units	48.0	47.7	Yes
London and South East Allowances	49.0	55.0	No
London Travel	3.0	3.0	No
Community Support Officers	39.0	47.0	Yes
Special Constables	6.6	0.0	Yes
Street Crime Initiative	25.0	5.0	Yes
Reform Deal	4.7	4.0	Yes
Neighbourhood Wardens	19.0	8.1	Yes

Amount (£ million)

Grant	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*Ringfenced*
Supporting People	1,807.0	1,714.9	Yes
Magistrates Courts	371.9	0.0	No
Detrunking	33.3	37.0	No
Bus Challenge and Kickstart	32.7	29.0	Yes
Beacons	5.0	5.0	No
Community Cohesion Pathfinder	0.4	0.0	Yes
GLA General Grant	36.3	37.5	No

[1] LPSA Reward Grant—this is the maximum provision as specified in individual councils LPSAs, and "allocations" will depend on performance.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average change in total Government grant per capita for *(a)* district councils, *(b)* county councils, *(c)* metropolitan councils, *(d)* unitary councils, *(e)* London boroughs, *(f)* fire authorities and *(g)* police authorities was in England in each year since 1997. [1118]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is shown in the table.

Percentage

	1998–99 to 1999–2000	*1999–2000 to 2000–01*	*2000–02 to 2001–02*	*2001–02 to 2002–03*	*2002–03 to 2003–04*	*2003–04 to 2004–05*
London (excluding GLA)	6.0	6.7	4.4	4.7	12.3	2.4
Metropolitan authorities	7.3	7.7	7.2	5.6	16.1	2.3
Unitary authorities	6.5	8.1	6.3	6.3	16.5	0.3
Shire counties	6.2	8.7	7.1	4.8	13.0	2.8
Shire districts	1.8	3.1	4.5	5.1	10.7	8.5
Fire authorities	3.6	2.3	3.0	2.4	4.5	42.8
Police authorities	2.3	4.5	6.0	2.4	7.3	2.3

The data used to calculate the changes are taken from data as reported by local authorities; they are outturn figures for 1998–99 to 2003–04 and budget estimates for 2004–05.

Changes between years may not be valid due to changing local authority responsibilities. For example, the decrease for fire authorities between 2003–04 and 2004–05 is due partly to the lower levels of grant per capita received by combined fire authorities compared with other fire authorities. Before 2004–05 grants were not paid directly to combined fire authorities and so these were not included in the figures for earlier years.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to increase the level of local taxation. [1123]

Mr. Woolas: The level of the council tax in the coming financial years will depend on local authorities' spending decisions. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will work to ensure that improved local services are deliverable within the spending plans for local government. The Government will not hesitate to use the capping powers to deal with excessive increases.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to supporting local authorities in delivering improvements in key public services without unacceptable council tax rises. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will continue to work closely with local government to ensure that levels of central grant are based on a realistic assessment of service commitments pressures faced by local government. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is looking to local authorities to deliver further efficiency savings, and will introduce three-year settlements to provide greater predictability for local authorities.

In the longer term, the Lyons Inquiry is looking to reform the system of local government finance to make it fairer and more sustainable.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to introduce unitary local government in England. [362]

Mr. Woolas: At present there are no plans to reorganise local government in England—the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is however aware that there is some interest in unitary local government and will listen carefully to the debate.

Local Government Standards Board

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many cases reported to the Local Government Standards Board in each of the last three years were disposed of *(a)* directly and *(b)* through reference to the adjudication panel; how many were found proven (i) by the Standards Board and (ii) by the adjudication panel; and how many were dismissed as unproven. [1039]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is shown on the following table.

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Allegations received (number)	2,948	3,566	3,861
Disposed of directly[1](number)	2,059	3,077	[3]4,169
Referred to adjudication panel (number)	110	89	111
Percentage where ethical standards officers' findings upheld	97	97	86

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Referred to local standards committees (number)	[2]n/a	58	89
Percentage where ethical standards officers' findings upheld	n/a	95	94

[1] Cases which were either not investigated; or where no evidence of a breach of the code of conduct was found; or where no action was required in respect of the matters under investigation.

[2] Regulations providing for referral to local standards committees were not yet in place.

[3] NB: allegations received in year do not equal number disposed of or referred due to end of year carry-over of cases

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in how many cases the decision of the Standards Board and adjudication panel has been challenged in the courts *(a)* successfully and *(b)* unsuccessfully in each of the last three years. [1040]

Mr. Woolas: Only one determination made by the adjudication panel for England was challenged in the courts in 2002–03. This was unsuccessful. There were no challenges in 2003–04. There were five challenges in 2004–05. Four of these were unsuccessful. The remaining challenge was partially successful in that the adjudication panel's finding was upheld but the sanction it had imposed was reduced.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average length of time was between a complaint being made to the Standards Board and *(a)* being found proven and fully disposed of and *(b)* being dismissed in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [1041]

Mr. Woolas: This information is shown on the following table.

Average time	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Where cases were not investigated, or where no evidence of a breach was found, or where no further action was required (days)	24	22	13
Where ethical standards officer conducted an investigation and made a finding that a breach of the code had occurred (months)	4.25	7.34	9.64

The lower average for the completion of those cases where a breach was found in 2002–03 reflected a number of relatively straightforward cases in that year, relating to parish councillors refusing to fill in a register of interests. The higher average in 2004–05 reflects the efforts the Standards Board made last year to clear a backlog of outstanding older cases.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated cost to public funds was of the Standards Board and Adjudication Panel case against Westminster City Councillor Mr. Paul Dimoldenberg; how long the case lasted, from the date of the complaint to Standards Board to the end of the adjudication panel hearing; what the outcome was; and if he will make a statement. [1043]

Mr. Woolas: The Standards Board is unable to give precise costs for any one investigation. The precise cost of a case will depend upon a number of factors, such as its inherent complexity, the number of witnesses involved or extent of representations made by parties or their legal advisers.

However, the Standards Board for England estimates that the current average cost to the board of an investigation into allegations of a breach of the code of conduct by members of relevant authorities is around £5,000 per case. The average costs of an adjudication panel hearing was £1,850 in the year 2004–05.

The case concerning Councillor Dimoldenberg lasted for just under two years from the date of initial referral to the Standards Board. The outcome was that Councillor Dimoldenberg was found to have breached the code of conduct through disclosing confidential information, but no sanction was imposed.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much Westminster City Council has recovered from Dame Shirley Porter as a result of the findings of the District Auditor and House of Lords against her; what assessment he had made of the prospects for recovering sums due *(a)* prior to and *(b)* since 30 June 2003; and if he will make a statement. [1044]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no powers to intervene in this matter or to compel the parties to provide us with information.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effects of the operation of the Local Government Standards Board on individuals' willingness to stand for election as local government councillors; and if he will make a statement. [1046]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is not aware of evidence to suggest that the operation of the Standards Board has substantially impacted on individuals' willingness to stand as local councillors. Our consultation on the introduction of a code of conduct for councillors received strong support.

The Government believe it is right that local councillors should observe certain minimum standards of conduct, and that the small number of councillors who behave in ways that are not compatible with high standards of public service should be subject to investigation and censure.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make provision for councillors facing serious complaints to the Standards Board under the Local Government Code of Conduct to receive financial support towards their legal costs; and if he will make a statement. [1047]

Mr. Woolas: The Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004 provides for relevant authorities to indemnify members and officers for personal liability arising from actions or decisions taken by them in the course of their official duties.

Among the circumstances in which an authority might decide to grant such an indemnity are where costs are incurred by a member in relation to the defence of proceedings under Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000, relating to allegations of breaches in the code of conduct for local authority members. Any such indemnity is limited by the Order to cases in which the member is found not to have breached the code. It is for authorities to decide whether they wish to provide indemnity in a particular case.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will require the Local Government Standards Board to exercise proportionality, by balancing the likely cost of an inquiry with the seriousness of the complaint, when investigating a complaint under the Local Government Code of Conduct; and if he will make a statement. [1048]

Mr. Woolas: The Standards Board for England fully recognises the need for proportionate use of public funds in its handling of allegations received, while ensuring that all investigations are conducted thoroughly and with integrity. Only the more serious complaints are investigated, as well as those that may set important legal precedents or which have the potential to damage public confidence in local government.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average cost of a Local Government Standards Board inquiry, including costs of any Adjudication Panel, were in each of the last three years, broken down by cases *(a)* found proven and *(b)* dismissed. [1049]

Mr. Woolas: The average cost to the Standards Board of an investigation into allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct by members of relevant authorities in 2003–04 was £4,145, and the average cost in 2004–05 was around £5,000. The average cost of an Adjudication Panel hearing in 2003–04 was £1,790, and in 2004–05 was £1,850. The information held by the Standards Board does not differentiate between cases where there were findings that breaches of the code were made, and where there were not. Information in respect of average costs of Standards Board investigations and Adjudication Panel hearings in 2002–03 is not available.

Lyons Review

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Lyons Review on the balance of funding will publish an interim report. [1122]

Mr. Woolas: The terms of reference of the independent inquiry into local government funding ask Sir Michael Lyons to report to my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer by the end of 2005. Within those terms of reference it is a matter for Sir Michael to determine how he conducts his work.

New Deal for Communities

John Hemming: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many New Deal for Communities bodies have been created; and how many of these bodies have changed their chief executive in the first year of operation. [914]

Mr. Woolas: In total there are 39 New Deal for Communities partnerships (NDCs). 17 pathfinder partnerships were announced in 1998, followed by a further 22 second round partnerships in 1999.

The table summarises the number of NDCs that changed their chief executive in the first year of operation:

	Number of NDC partnerships
Change of chief executive	2
Temporary chief executive	2
No change of chief executive	23
Chief executive not appointed	7
No records held	5

New Localism

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what definition he uses of the term new localism; and if he will make a statement. [1093]

Mr. Woolas: There is no agreed definition for new localism. But the Government wish to see an enhanced role for local authorities acting as leaders of their communities.

Referendums and Elections

Mr. Heald: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what role the Department plays in the administration of referendums and elections. [89]

Mr. Woolas: Following the machinery of Government change announced by the Prime Minister on 23 May 2005, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for policy relating to when local government elections are to be held, the constitutions of the councils being elected, and to the way in which ward boundaries are to be determined and reviewed. The Department for Constitutional Affairs will be responsible for all arrangements for conducting elections including electoral registration and electoral modernisation. The Department for Constitutional Affairs will also sponsor the English and Welsh Parliamentary Boundary Commissions.

Regional Control Rooms (Fire/Civil Defence)

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to consult *(a)* fire authorities and *(b)* local government organisations prior to determining the locations of the proposed regional control rooms for fire and civil defence purposes. [1594]

Jim Fitzpatrick: We consulted stakeholders through the Practitioners Forum, and the chairs of all English Fire and Rescue Authorities, on the accommodation criteria in December 2003, before formally beginning the procurement process with an official notice in the Official Journal of the European Union in April 2004, and have involved key stakeholders at every stage, including the final moderation meetings held in February and March 2005. We expect to make an announcement soon.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress he has made in identifying suitable sites for the proposed new regional fire control centres. [86]

Mr. Woolas: We consulted stakeholders through the Practitioners Forum, and the Chairs of all English Fire and Rescue Authorities, on the accommodation criteria in December 2003, before formally beginning the procurement process with an official notice in the Journal of the European Union in April 2004, and have involved key stakeholders at every stage, including the final moderation meetings held in February and March 2005. We expect to make an announcement soon.

Regional Government Finance

Mr. Walker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will take steps to redirect central Government spending away from the north of England to the east of England; and if he will make a statement. [1125]

Mr. Woolas: No. Public spending is allocated to Departments through the Government's biannual Spending Review. Departments, in turn, allocate funds according to Government priorities and need. In making decisions about allocations, Ministers have regard to the views of regional and other stakeholders expressed through regional emphasis documents and other means.

Safer Stronger Communities Fund

John Hemming: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the forecast spending on the Safer Stronger Communities Fund is for financial years *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [908]

Yvette Cooper: The forecast spending on the Safer Stronger Communities Fund for the financial years 2005–08 are as follows:

£ million

	A minimum forecast
(a) 2005–06	210
(b) 2006–07	220
(c) 2007–08	230

Shared Equity Plans

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his estimate is of the costs to the Exchequer in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, *(c)* 2007–08 and *(d)* 2008–09 of recently announced plans to assist homebuyers through shared equity plans; and if he will make a statement. [1308]

Yvette Cooper: Through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme for 2004–06 around £420 million has been allocated for the current Homebuy loan scheme to provide both open market and new build properties for purchase. The new build properties will start on site in 2004–06.

The regional allocations of the £5.5 billion for regional housing pot for spending in 2006–07 and 2007–08 were announced recently. Decisions on the amount of these resources to be used for shared equity schemes will be taken in the summer in the light of advice from regional housing boards. In addition English Partnerships are developing innovate solutions to equity sharing as part of their London Wide and First Time Buyers Initiatives. They are currently refining the business case and costings.

Future funding and delivery of outputs from, 2008–09, will be influenced by the outcome of the next spending review in 2006.

Solent Gateway

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) which local authority areas fall within the Government's definition of the Solent Gateway; [364]

(2) if he will make a statement on plans to make the Solent Gateway an urban growth area. [368]

Yvette Cooper: There is a need for more homes to be built in the wider south east, to ease housing shortages which are making homes unaffordable and to encourage economic growth and regeneration in deprived areas. Local authorities across the wider south east recognise this need and are looking at how they can meet that demand. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recognise that some of these communities will need Government support to plan ahead for long-term delivery, including help with the development of brownfield sites and local infrastructure problems, and wants to respond positively.

Officials from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have held an initial meeting with the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire, which represents the local authorities in the Solent area, regarding their proposals for housing growth as part of their plans to build sustainable communities. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be interested to receive any growth and regeneration proposals from the local authorities in the Solent area, along with others. These will also be an input to the South East Plan proposals, which will go to public consultation and then be tested by public examination before an independent panel, before consideration by the First Secretary of State. The Government have not proposed any local targets for housing growth in the Solent area, nor have they designated it as the Solent Gateway.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with councils in Hampshire about Solent Gateway. [738]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 24 May 2005]:* There is a need for more homes to be built in the wider south east, to ease housing shortages which are making homes unaffordable and to encourage economic growth and regeneration in deprived areas. Local authorities across the wider south east recognise this need and are looking at how they can meet that demand. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recognise that some of these communities will need Government support to plan ahead for long-term delivery, including help with the development of brownfield sites and local infrastructure problems, and wants to respond positively.

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Street Wardens

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library the guidance issued to round two street warden schemes whose funding ended in March on how such schemes should be funded once central Government support ended. [1117]

Mr. Woolas: Copies of the guidance issued to round two street warden schemes whose funding ended in March 2005 has been placed in the Library of the House of Commons.

HEALTH

Abortion

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Government will implement the Science and Technology Recommendation No 77 in its report on human reproductive technologies and the law that there be a Joint Committee of both Houses set up to consider the scientific, medical and social changes in relation to abortion that have taken place since 1967. [1602]

Jane Kennedy: The Government is considering the Committee's report and will publish its response in due course.

Alzheimer's

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with doctors about the use of Reminyl, Aricept and Exelan for treating Alzheimer's disease; and if she will make a statement. [1305]

Mr. Byrne: The Department's response to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's consultation on its review of the 2001 appraisal of Alzheimer's drugs was informed by advice from the Department's professional adviser on mental health services for older people. No other recent discussions between ministers and doctors have taken place on this issue.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which drugs are available for prescribing to treat the effects of Alzheimer's disease; and if she will make a statement. [1306]

Mr. Byrne: Four drugs are licensed for the treatment of the effects of Alzheimer's disease: rivastigmine, galantamine, donepezil and memantine.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether Reminyl, Aricept and Exelen are available on free prescription for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease; what plans she has to change the availability on free prescription of those drugs; and if she will make a statement. [1636]

Jane Kennedy: We have no plans to extend the existing list of medical conditions that give exemption from prescription charges. The list has been reviewed on a number of occasions but no clear cut case for extending it has emerged. There is no consensus on what additional conditions might be included in any revised list of medical exemptions, or how distinctions could be drawn between one condition and another. Those Alzheimer's sufferers who are aged 60 or over are currently entitled to free prescriptions on grounds of age.

Audiology

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps are being taken to provide free hearing tests to those who need them; [926]

(2) how many people have received a digital hearing aid on the NHS. [927]

Mr. Byrne: Hearing tests have always been available free of charge for patients referred to a national health service audiology department. If a patient thinks they are hard of hearing and might need a hearing aid, they should go to their general practitioner who will either refer them to an ear nose and throat clinic or send them to the audiology department at their local hospital to have a hearing test.

Over 400,000 people have now received digital hearing aids on the NHS.

Breast Cancer

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the screening of all women diagnosed with breast cancer for HER2 positivity to be routine across the NHS. [2074]

Ms Rosie Winterton: At present, Herceptin is only licensed in the United Kingdom for the treatment of advanced breast cancer, which affects around 11,000 women in England each year. We are aware that two major trials have recently indicated that Herceptin may also have an important role to play in the adjuvant treatment of early breast cancer though this is not yet a licensed indication.

There is currently no national guidance about when in the patient pathway the HER2 test, which determines an individual breast cancer patient's suitability for treatment with the drug Herceptin, should be used. Decisions are made by clinicians, based on factors such as the extent of the disease, previous treatment experience, the patient's fitness and wishes and emerging evidence.

Cervical Smears

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average time taken for a woman to receive the results of a cervical smear test was in each health authority in the last period for which figures are available. [1130]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 26 May 2005]:* The requested data are not collected centrally. We do collect the breakdown of notification of screening results within four weeks, four to six weeks and six weeks or more by strategic health authority (SHA), as shown in the table.

Information about the time from the taking of a sample to the notification of the test result is currently available only where the result letter is sent by the primary care organisation.

Notification of cervical screening result 2003–04

		Percentage of results sent by primary care organisation where time from screening to notification was:		
SHA	*Percentage of all results sent by primary care organisation*	*Less then or equal to four weeks*	*More than four weeks up to six weeks*	*Six weeks or more*
England	86	38	29	33
County Durham and Tees Valley	98	59	34	7
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	76	49	31	20
Cheshire and Merseyside	99	40	37	24
Cumbria and Lancashire	98	54	25	21
Greater Manchester	96	26	26	48
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	96	61	9	30
South Yorkshire	98	70	24	6
West Yorkshire	90	38	30	32
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	87	50	37	13
Trent	84	37	44	19
Birmingham and The Black Country	98	30	25	45
Shropshire and Staffordshire	99	48	37	15
West Midlands South	97	13	21	66
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	88	24	22	54
Essex	95	47	27	26
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	88	30	36	34
North Central London	64	25	32	43
North East London	96	36	33	31
North West London	92	11	16	73
South East London	44	47	29	25
South West London	92	27	23	49
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	75	28	43	29
Kent and Medway	88	49	39	12
Surrey and Sussex	92	38	22	40
Thames Valley	88	31	29	40
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	68	66	19	15
Dorset and Somerset	71	37	31	32
South West Peninsula	31	21	38	41

Charing Cross and Hammersmith Hospital

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans there are to update facilities at Charing Cross hospital; [2098]

(2) what plans there are to update facilities at Hammersmith hospital. [2101]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 217W.

Chase Farm Hospital

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she is taking to reduce waiting times at Chase Farm Hospital; and if she will make a statement. [1124]

Jane Kennedy: The Government are committed to reducing waiting times for treatment. The national health service, including Barnet and Chase Farm NHS Trust, is working towards achieving a maximum six-month wait for in-patient treatment and three months for an out-patients appointment by December 2005. By 2008, no one will have to wait longer than 18 weeks from general practitioner referral to hospital treatment.

Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust plans to open a new £4 million surgi-centre at the end of June 2005. This will provide treatment to 3,000 patients a year and support the trust in achieving waiting time targets.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what treatment is available for people diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome or myalgic encephalomyelitis on the NHS; [1428]

(2) what her most recent estimate is of the incidence of chronic fatigue syndrome or myalgic encephalomyelitis in *(a)* South West London, *(b)* London and *(c)* England; [1429]

(3) what estimate she has made of the number of people in England who have chronic fatigue syndrome or myalgic encephalomyelitis but are not registered as receiving treatment; [1430]

(4) if she will make a statement on funding for treatment for myalgic encephalomyelitis [1431]

Mr. Byrne: Medical opinion differs on the most effective treatment for sufferers of chronic fatigue syndrome or myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME). In recognition of this, in 2004 the Department asked the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) to produce clinical guidelines for the diagnosis and management of CFS/ME. This work is expected to be published in 2007. The national health service is able to provide treatment for the range problematic symptoms often associated with this condition—for example sleep disorders, pain, anxiety, depression and stomach disorders.

The three main treatments provided by the NHS specifically for CFS/ME are:

Pacing—learning to effectively manage activity and energy levels.

Graded activity—gradual but progressive increases in aerobic exercise.

Cognitive behavioural therapy—helping recognise and change behaviours and beliefs which can impact on the illness.

Data on the incidence and treatment rates of specific medical conditions such as CFS/ME are not collected by the Department. However, it is estimated that around 240,000 people in the United Kingdom suffer from CFS/ME.

Local health professionals in primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for determining which health services their local populations require and ensuring the provision of these services. It is, therefore, the responsibility of individual PCTs to decide the level of funding they allocate to services for CFS/ME. However, in May 2003, the Department announced that additional funding of £8.5 million would be made available for services specifically designed for people with CFS/ME. This money will help develop clinical services where none currently exist, including 12 new centres and 28 local support teams solely for CFS/ME sufferers.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what referral mechanisms are in place for *(a)* South West London and St. George's NHS Trust and *(b)* Kingston Primary Care Trust to access chronic fatigue syndrome or myalgic encephalomyelitis centres and support teams in the region; and if she will make a statement. [1433]

Jane Kennedy: The South West London and St. George's Mental Health Trust can refer patients to the chronic fatigue syndrome and myalgic encephalopathy (CFS/ME) service based at the Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust. For patients who are very disabled, specialist placement is funded by the relevant primary care trust (PCT) and is decided by their multidisciplinary placement panels, for which a psychiatric report is usually required.

Kingston PCT can access the CFS/ME service, based in the Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust. The PCT has a long standing service level agreement with the South London and Maudsley Mental Health Trust and Barts and The London NHS Trust.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision *(a)* South West London and St. George's NHS Trust and *(b)* Kingston Primary Care Trust have for chronic fatigue syndrome or myalgic encephalomyelitis services; what specific funding they receive to deliver these services; and if she will make a statement. [1432]

Jane Kennedy: I understand that South West London and St. George's National Health Service Trust refers patients to the chronic fatigue syndrome and myalgic encephalopathy (CFS/ME) service, based in the Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust. The South West London and St. George's Mental Health Trust does not receive specific funding for these services.

Kingston primary care trust (PCT) has a services level agreement with the South London and Maudsley Mental Health NHS Trust and Barts and The London NHS Trust.

Kingston PCT received £65,000 for the service at St. Helier hospital, which is accessed by general practitioner referral. This was part of the £8.5 million made available nationally for services specifically designed for people with CFS/ME.

Clinical Staff (Hertfordshire)

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she is taking to retain experienced clinical staff in Hertfordshire's NHS trusts; and if she will make a statement. [785]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government are committed to working with all national health service employers to support the NHS to recruit and retain its workforce. This includes experienced clinical staff in Hertfordshire.

A range of initiatives is being used locally by all NHS organisations to retain their staff. These include Improving Working Lives and childcare.

Improving Working Lives requires NHS organisations to commit to and deliver modern employment practices that support staff and enable them to have a healthy work-life balance. It covers a number of good practice areas, including training and development, equality and diversity, healthy workplaces, flexible working, and flexible retirement. The NHS childcare strategy is part of the Improving Working Lives programme, which also includes a number of discrete initiatives directly aimed at improving the working lives of doctors, such as the flexible careers scheme.

Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many consultants were employed by her Department in each of the last three years; and what their names were. [1332]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not centrally hold a record of numbers and names of individual consultants. Such information could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Continuing Care

Mr. Barstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases have been subject to review as part of the NHS continuing care restitution review; how many were found to be eligible for NHS continuing care; how many of those not found eligible subsequently took their case to the Health Ombudsman; and what the result was in each case. [1565]

Mr. Byrne: Details of the review's progress were presented to the House in a written statement by my hon. Friend the Member for South Thanet (Dr. Ladyman) on 16 September 2004, *Official Report*, columns 175–76WS. Of the 11,655 requests for investigations received by 31 March 2004, 86.1 per cent. had been investigated, with 1,796 being found eligible for recompense. No later data are available. The Department does not collect data about the number of people who subsequently took cases to the Health Ombudsman.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what work her Department has undertaken to act on the recommendations of the Health Ombudsman in her two reports on NHS continuing care; and when she expects her Department to publish *(a)* national eligibility criteria and *(b)* an assessment methodology for NHS continuing care. [1558]

Mr. Byrne: The Department's work programme in response to the Ombudsman's report was set out in a written statement by my hon. Friend the Member for South Thanet (Dr. Ladyman) on 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 108WS. Officials are working closely with stakeholders to form a national framework in response to the Health Ombudsman and expect to publish national eligibility criteria and suitable assessment methodologies in early 2006.

Dentistry

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans there are to increase the number of NHS dentists in Gloucestershire; and if she will make a statement. [680]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts (PCTs) in Gloucestershire are working with local dentists, developing plans to increase national health service provision across the area. Twelve dentists have been recruited from abroad and are working in the NHS in Gloucestershire. Five of these dentists are from Poland and the remaining seven are from outside the European Union.

Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire strategic health authority has received £2 million from access funding and the three PCTs in Gloucestershire have reported proposals to spend their share on commissioning additional capacity to provide for the registration of 7,100 patients and the treatment of 900 additional orthodontic patients. In addition, West Gloucestershire PCT is one of the 16 PCTs in England receiving assistance from the Department's dental access support team. With the team's support, a new dental practice has been established in Cinderford, in the Forest of Dean, and there are plans to establish a new four surgery practice within the centre of Gloucester City by mid 2005.

Nationally we are currently undertaking the most far reaching reforms of NHS dentistry since 1948, supported by the biggest investment programme in the history of NHS dentistry. We are providing NHS dentistry with extra funding of over £250 million a year from 2005–06, an increase of nearly 20 per cent. over 2003–04 levels. We are also funding an extra 170 dental training places from this October, a 25 per cent. increase, supported by £80 million capital investment. Pending completion of the training of the additional students, we are, this year, recruiting the equivalent of 1,000 extra dentists and we have allocated £59 million to improve NHS dentistry.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when her Department will restart negotiations with the British Dental Association on the new general dental services contract. [2280]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Departmental officials met the British Dental Association on 21 February 2005 and 16 April 2005 this year to discuss the national health service dentistry modernisation programme. A further meeting is currently being arranged.

Departmental Staffing

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff were employed in her Department *(a)* in 2004 and *(b)* at the latest date for which figures are available to undertake policy work as part of the "Valuing People" programme; what plans she has for future staffing levels; and if she will make a statement. [1197]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 26 May 2005]:* In May 2004, 11 staff worked on learning disability policy.

The Department has reorganised the way it works in all policy areas and reduced in size in consequence. Policy on learning disability is clearly expressed and set out in the "Valuing People" White Paper. As new policies need to be developed, extra resources will be brought in as necessary from a pool of staff that currently numbers 40. In both years, 14 staff in the "Valuing People" support team have been responsible for supporting implementation of the policy. Currently four staff devote a proportion of their time to learning disability issues.

The Department of Health and other Government Departments are undertaking a number of projects on wider areas of work. These include the adult services Green Paper, "Independence Well-Being and Choice", the Prime Minister's strategy unit report, "Improving Life Chances for Disabled People", the Mental Capacity Act implementation and the "Supporting People" programme. These all benefit people with learning disabilities, although they are not exclusively for this client group.

Diagnostic and Treatment Centres (Private)

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the clinical innovations available in privately run diagnostic and treatment centres which are not to be found in any NHS hospital or diagnostic and treatment centre. [478]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 23 May 2005]:* Two early examples are the first ever mobile cataract units, which can travel the country serving areas with greatest demand; and the first national mobile scanning unit, which can serve all regions of England with need for magnetic resonance imaging scans.

Domiciliary Care (West Chelmsford)

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in West Chelmsford constituency who were receiving domiciliary care in 1997–98; and how many were receiving domiciliary care in West Chelmsford constituency on the latest date for which figures are available. [2288]

Ms Rosie Winterton: At 31 March 2004, about 36,600 adults in Essex were helped to live independently at home through the provision of a variety of community-based social services. Community based services include day care, meals, respite care, direct payments, professional support, transport and equipment as well as home care. Corresponding data for 1997–98 are not available.

The estimated number of households receiving home care in Essex in September 1997 and September 2004 was 13,000 and 12,200 respectively. The number of people in these households is not known for 1997. In September 2004, the estimated number of adults receiving home care was 12,300.

Local government re-organisation took place on 1 April 1998, forming the unitary authorities of Southend and Thurrock and the reduced area of Essex. Hence, data for 1997 and 2004 are based on the boundary of the former County of Essex.

Data for West Chelmsford constituency are not centrally available.

Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what research her Department has commissioned into developing a therapy for Duchenne muscular dystrophy; and if she will make a statement; [1544]

(2) how much funding her Department has committed for research into Duchenne muscular dystrophy in 2005–06; [1545]

(3) what assessment her Department has made of the clinical trials being carried out in the development of a treatment for Duchenne muscular dystrophy; and if she will make a statement. [1546]

Jane Kennedy: In 2004, the Department announced £1.6 million funding, from the Genetics White Paper, for a four year project which aims to address the cause of muscular dystrophy.

The main part of the Department's expenditure on health research is allocated to and managed by national health service organisations. Details of individual projects supported in the NHS, including a number concerned with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

It would not be appropriate for the Government to make assessments of ongoing clinical trials.

End-of life Care

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to provide further services for end-of-life care. [1474]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are committed to the importance of patients being able to choose where they would prefer to live and die.

We are providing an additional £12 million over next three years for the end of life care initiative. It will support staff working in general practices, care homes and on hospital wards so that all adult patients nearing the end of life, regardless of their diagnosis, will have access to high quality palliative care and be so able to choose where they are cared for.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the proportion of national health service expenditure that was spent on people in the final *(a)* month, *(b)* three months and *(c)* six months of their lives in the last period for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [1165]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not hold information about the proportion of national health service expenditure spent on people in the final phase of their lives. It is for individual primary care trusts to decide the level of funding they allocate to palliative care services. The Government recognises that, although most people would prefer to remain at home, only about 20 per cent. of all patients achieve a home death.

We are supporting strategies that enable more patients to exercise choice in where they are cared for and die and are funding specific initiatives in this area. These initiatives will enable more people to die in the place of their choice. These include an additional £50 million per annum for specialist palliative care, £12 million for end of life care and £6 million for integrated cancer care pilots.

Flixotide

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many yellow card reports have been recorded in relation to the drug Flixotide in the treatment of asthma in each of the last five years; [1817]

(2) how many deaths have been recorded as caused by high doses of the drug Flixotide to treat asthma in each of the past five years; [1818]

(3) how many prescriptions for Flixotide have been provided in each of the last five years to *(a)* children and *(b)* adults for the treatment of asthma; [1819]

(4) what assessment she has made of the safety of Flixotide in the treatment of asthma; and if she will make a statement. [1820]

Jane Kennedy: The table shows the number of prescriptions of Flixotide dispensed in the community in England in the last five years. The information has been taken from the prescripton cost analysis (PCA) system.

Thousands

	Number of items of Flixotide that have been dispensed	
	(a) children	*(b) adults*
2000	330	1,360.0
2001	360	1,370.1
2002	340	1,298.9
2003	280	1,131.3
2004	230	1,004.0

There have been 529 yellow card reports of suspected adverse drug reactions associated with the drug Flixotide submitted since 1993. There has been one report of a suspected adverse drug reaction associated with high dose Flixotide, for which the outcome was fatal, in the last five years. The death occurred in 2001 and was reported to the yellow card scheme in April 2002.

As with all medicines, the safety of the inhaled steroid medicine Flixotide (fluticasone) has been continuously monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), with expert advice from the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) throughout its use in clinical practice. Concerns regarding possible side effects from high doses of fluticasone, and other inhaled steroids, led the then Medicines Control Agency to conduct an exhaustive review of the evidence for this in 1997. The CSM issued advice in a bulletin to healthcare professionals in 1998 about possible adverse effects of both inhaled and nasal steroids, especially when used in high doses and for prolonged periods. In addition, further advice specifically relating to adult doses of Flixotide was issued in 2001.

The CSM conducted a further wide-ranging review of the issue of adrenal suppression caused by high dose inhaled steroids, such as fluticasone, in 2002, resulting in further strengthened warnings to prescribers and a reminder of the licensed doses of these products. The safety of Flixotide remains under continual review.

General Practitioners

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners there are in *(a)* Hertfordshire and *(b)* England per head of population. [782]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table. The latest available strategic health authority (SHA) and primary care trust (PCT) population data is for 2003.

All practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] *per 100,000 head of population for Bedford and Hertfordshire SHA by PCT, 2003–04*

Number (headcount)

		2003			2004		
		All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)	*Population*	*Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars) per 100,000 head of population*	*Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)*	*Population*	*All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars) per 100,000 head of population*
England		30,358	49,855,700	61	31,523	50,056,900	63
Q02	Bedford and Hertfordshire PCT	949	1,614,700	59	998	n/a	n/a
5GD	Bedford	88	149,900	59	97	n/a	n/a
5GE	Bedfordshire Heartlands	143	238,700	60	152	n/a	n/a
5GW	Dacorum	92	138,000	67	92	n/a	n/a
5CP	Hertsmere	48	93,800	51	50	n/a	n/a
5GC	Luton	97	185,200	52	105	n/a	n/a
5GH	North Hertfordshire and Stevenage	99	181,400	55	105	n/a	n/a
5GK	Royston, Buntingford and Bishops Stortford	39	71,000	55	41	n/a	n/a
5GJ	South East Hertfordshire	104	163,900	63	103	n/a	n/a
5GX	St. Albans and Harpenden	79	131,600	60	83	n/a	n/a
5GV	Watford and Three Rivers	106	163,300	65	109	n/a	n/a
5GG	Welwyn Hatfield	54	97,900	55	61	n/a	n/a

[1] General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars) includes contracted GPs, general medical service (GMS) others and personal medical service (PMS) others. Prior to September 2004, this group included GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (para 52 SFA), PMS other, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

n/a = not available

Data as at 30 September.

Source:

National Health Service Health and Social Care Information Centre GMS and PMS statistics.

2001 ONS Population Census.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to increase the number of general practitioners in Hertfordshire; and if she will make a statement. [783]

Ms Rosie Winterton: To underpin increased capacity in medical schools, we have introduced a range of measures that help the supply of general practitioners. Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire have a strategy to increase the recruitment, retention and training of GPs in the two counties, and are participating in the centrally funded GP flexible career scheme, which seeks to increase the number of flexible posts in general practice. In addition, other family friendly policies have been introduced, including access to childcare co-ordinators and better provision of childcare for primary care staff. These include funding through global sum for locum cover for GPs on maternity, paternity and adoptive leave.

Primary medical care contracts have been backed by a massive increase in investment, the scale of which will lead to higher quality and wider availability of services.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of general practitioner practices refuse to make advance appointments. [911]

Mr. Byrne: Latest monitoring data shows that 1.8 per cent. of general practices are continuing to deny patients any opportunity to book advance appointments. This is not acceptable practice and the Department is continuing to work with strategic health authorities to get primary care trusts to tackle the issue locally and ensure practices offer patients flexible as well as fast access.

Health Service Trust Deficits

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the financial deficit of York and Selby NHS primary care trust was on the latest date for which figures are available; what assessment she has made of the reasons for the accumulation of the deficit; and if she will provide assistance to the trust to enable it to eradicate the deficit without reducing the number of staff or the standard and availability of services; [50]

(2) what the financial deficit of South Tees hospitals NHS trust was on the latest date for which figures are available; what assessment she has made of the reasons for the accumulation of the deficit; and if she will provide assistance to the trust to enable it to eradicate the deficit without reducing the number of staff or the standard and availability of local services; [51]

(3) what the financial deficit of Craven, Harrogate and Rural districts NHS primary care trust was on the latest date for which figures are available; what assessment she has made of the reasons for the accumulation of the deficit; and if she will provide assistance to the trust to enable it to eradicate the deficit without reducing the number of staff employed or the standard and availability of local services; [52]

(4) what the financial deficit of Teesside, East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service (TENYAS) was on the latest date for which figures are available; what assessment she has made of the reasons for the accumulation of the deficit; and if she will provide assistance to TENYAS to enable it to eradicate the deficit without reducing the number of staff employed or the standard and availability of local services. [53]

Mr. Byrne: Selby and York primary care trust (PCT) is forecasting an outturn deficit of £6.9 million in 2004–05. Craven, Harrogate and Rural district PCT is not forecasting a deficit for 2004–05. Tees and East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service national health service trust is forecasting that it will break even in 2004–05 having received planned brokerage of £2.6 million from the North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire strategic health authority (SHA). The Selby and York PCT's three year (iterative) financial recovery plan was presented to the PCT board on 17 May 2005 and approved. The South Tees hospitals NHS trust is forecasting a deficit of £9 million as at 31 March 2005, as opposed to a mid-year forecast deficit of £12 million. In addition, £12 million brokerage has also been provided by County Durham and Tees Valley SHA. A detailed recovery plan is to be presented to the trust board meeting on 7 June.

In the current financial year, allocations to PCTs in the North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA area have increased by £135 million. Allocations to PCTs in the County Durham and Tees Valley SHA area have increased by £114 million.

It is now the responsibility of SHAs to deliver both overall financial balance for their local health communities and to ensure each organisation achieves financial balance. However, there is a degree of flexibility in how this is managed at a local level. In circumstances where a surplus or underspend cannot be generated in the following year, SHAs can agree to a recovery plan which phases the recovery of deficits over a number of years.

Hepatitis C

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has commissioned on the rates of hepatitis C infection in prisons; and what measures she is taking to tackle the disease in prisons. [1705]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The then Public Health Laboratory Service undertook an unlinked, anonymised survey of the prevalence of blood borne viruses amongst prisoners in England in 1997–98. This indicated that 9 per cent. of adult men, 11 per cent. of women and 0.6 per cent. of male young offenders had evidence of previous exposure to hepatitis C.

The hepatitis C action plan for England (June 2004) envisages that prisoners, who are one of the priority groups identified within it, should have equal access to the full range of testing, diagnostic, assessment and treatment services that it specifies. The national health service is responsible for commissioning specialist health services in prison establishments in England.

There is a strategy for preventing the spread of communicable diseases, including hepatitis C, in prison establishments that includes training, education, prevention, risk reduction and harm minimisation measures, such as the reintroduction of disinfecting tablets.

Herceptin

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when she expects the National Institute for Clinical Excellence to have completed its assessment of the anti-breast cancer drug Herceptin; [1022]

(2) if she will make dedicated funds available to NHS hospital trusts who wish to buy the anti-breast cancer drug Herceptin; and if she will make such funds available before the National Institute for Clinical Excellence has completed its assessment of the drug; [1023]

(3) how many NHS hospital trusts have applied to their drugs and therapeutics committees to buy the anti-breast cancer drug Herceptin. [1027]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has already produced guidance on Herceptin for the treatment of advanced breast cancer, which it is now reviewing as part of the development of clinical guidelines for breast cancer.

Herceptin is not yet licensed in England for the treatment of early breast cancer. However, the Department is aware that there have been positive results from trials of Herceptin for the treatment of early breast cancer and is urgently considering referring Herceptin for the treatment of early breast cancer to NICE. The Department has made it clear that funding for newly licensed treatments should not be withheld because guidance from NICE is unavailable. In these circumstances, we expect primary care trusts (PCTs) to take full account of the available evidence when reaching funding decisions. Where the evidence is very strong, there is no reason to believe a PCT would refuse funding.

The Department has no plans to make dedicated funds available to national health service for the purchase of Herceptin. We are putting record amounts of new investment into the NHS—between 2003 and 2008 NHS expenditure in England will increase on average by 7.5 per cent. each year. It is for PCTs to decide how best to spend these resources, taking into account local circumstances.

The Department does not hold information on how many NHS hospital trusts have applied to their drugs and therapeutics committees to buy Herceptin.

Hospitals (Shropshire)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time equivalent administrative staff have been employed at *(a)* the RJ and AH Orthopaedic hospital, Gobowen, *(b)* the Princess Royal hospital, Telford and *(c)* the Royal Shrewsbury hospital in the last five years. [2236]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the tables.

National health service hospital and community health services: administrative staff by level in each specified NHS trust as at 30 September each specified year

	Total specified staff	Senior manager	Manager	Clerical and administrative staff
2000				
Total specified organisations	682	16	42	624
RKF The Princess Royal hospital NHS trust	200	2	19	179
RLZ Royal Shrewsbury hospitals NHS trust	340	8	11	321
RL1 Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District hospital NHS trust	142	6	13	124
RXW Shrewsbury and Telford hospitals NHS trust	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2001				
Total specified organisations	733	18	46	669
RKF The Princess Royal hospital NHS trust	217	5	21	191
RLZ Royal Shrewsbury hospitals NHS trust	369	8	13	348
RL1 Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District hospital NHS trust	146	5	12	130
RXW Shrewsbury and Telford hospitals NHS trust	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2002				
Total specified organisations	866	24	42	801
RKF The Princess Royal hospital NHS trust	249	6	20	223
RLZ Royal Shrewsbury hospitals NHS trust	435	9	13	413
RL1 Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District hospital NHS trust	182	9	9	165
RXW Shrewsbury and Telford hospitals NHS trust	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2003				
Total specified organisations	920	20	52	848
RKF The Princess Royal hospital NHS trust	264	5	23	237
RLZ Royal Shrewsbury hospitals NHS trust	456	8	12	436
RL1 Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District hospital NHS trust	200	7	18	176
RXW Shrewsbury and Telford hospitals NHS trust	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2004				
Total specified organisations	968	42	47	880
RKF The Princess Royal hospital NHS trust	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
RLZ Royal Shrewsbury hospitals NHS trust	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
RL1 Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District hospital NHS trust	223	20	16	187
RXW Shrewsbury and Telford hospitals NHS trust	745	22	30	693

Notes:
n/a = not applicable.
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.
2. Senior managers and managers are staff with overall responsibility for budgets, manpower or assets, or accountable for a significant area of work. Senior managers include staff at executive level and those who report directly to the board.
3. These staff are essential to the smooth running of hospitals, trusts and strategic health authorities. This excludes nursing, scientific, therapeutic and technical and ambulance managers in posts requiring specific clinical qualifications.
4. Clerical and administrative includes staff working in central functions. The group includes areas such as personnel, finance, information technology, legal services, library services, health education and general management support services.
5. It also includes staff working as direct support to qualified clinical staff such as medical secretaries and medical records officers.
Source:
Health and social care information centre non-medical workforce census.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many cases of MRSA there have been at *(a)* the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, *(b)* the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford and *(c)* the RJ and AH Orthopaedic Hospital, Gobowen in each of the last five years, in people aged over 65 years; [2237]

(2) how many cases of MRSA there have been at *(a)* the RJ and AH Orthopaedic Hospital, Gobowen, *(b)* the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford and *(c)* the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital in each of the last five years, in people aged under 18 years; [2238]

(3) how many cases of MRSA there have been at *(a)* the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, *(b)* the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford and *(c)* the RJ and AH Orthopaedic Hospital, Gobowen in each of the last five years. [2239]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the format requested.

The mandatory surveillance system which collects data on methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) bloodstream infections commenced in April 2001 and gives data by national health service trust only and not by hospital. It does not collect information on age groups.

The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and the Princess Royal Hospital were separate acute trusts until October 2003, when they merged to form the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust.

The Health Protection Agency is unable to provide updated MRSA rates for the two constituent hospitals prior to the merger, because revised bed occupancy rates for the two constituent hospitals are not available.

The table shows relevant data for the years 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04 and the first six months of the reporting year 2004–05.

Organisation and time period	*Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports*	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed days*
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust		
April 2001 to March 2002	28	0.1
April 2002 to March 2003	33	0.125
April 2003 to March 2004	58	0.2
April 2004 to September 2004	24	0.16
Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust		
April 2001 to March 2002	1	0.02
April 2002 to March 2003	1	0.02
April 2003 to March 2004	7	0.12
April 2004 to September 2004	2	0.07

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the budget deficit has been of *(a)* the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and *(b)* the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford in each of the last five years; [2242]

(2) what the budget of the *(a)* Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and *(b)* the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford has been in each of the last five years. [2245]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is as follows.

Table 1 shows the total income for the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital National Health Service Trust, the Princess Royal Hospital NHS Trust and the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust.

Table 1

	Royal Shrewsbury Hospital NHS Trust	*Princess Royal Hospital NHS Trust*	*Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust*
1999–2000	84,600,000	40,216,000	n/a
2000–01	80,280,000	43,770,000	n/a
2001–02	91,670,000	47,555,000	n/a
2002–03	98,202,000	53,309,000	n/a
2003–04	n/a	n/a	161,897,000

Table 2 shows the retained surplus/(deficit) for the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital NHS Trust, the Princess Royal Hospital NHS Trust and the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust.

Table 2

	Royal Shrewsbury Hospital NHS Trust	*Princess Royal Hospital NHS Trust*	*Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust*
1999–2000	(646,000)	(826,000)	n/a
2000–01	607,000	260,000	n/a
2001–02	(494,000)	(545,000)	n/a
2002–03	(1,889,000)	(1,118,000)	n/a
2003–04	n/a	n/a	(791,000)

Note:

The Princess Royal Hospital NHS Trust and the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital NHS Trust merged in October 2003 to become the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust. Accounts for 2003–04 were only received from the merged trust; it is not possible to show figures for the two predecessor trusts for that year.

Sources:

Audited summarisation schedules of the above trust 1999–2000 to 2003–04.

Intensive Care

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether guidance has been issued on the maximum permissible length of time between a patient being admitted to an intensive care unit and being reviewed by a consultant intensivist; [222]

(2) whether NHS trusts are required to record delays in admission to intensive care units as critical incidents through their relevant incident monitoring system. [223]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has not issued guidance on the length of time between admission to an intensive care unit and review by a consultant intensivist. In terms of more general guidance on the management of admissions and discharges for critical care services, national health service trusts are expected to take into account the Department's current guidance issued in May 2000, "Comprehensive Critical Care—A Review of Adult Critical Care Services" and standards developed by the Intensive Care Society. The Department's guidance can be found at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/28/72/04082872.pdf

Levonelle-2

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the drug Levonelle-2 is licensed for women under the age of 16 years. [1515]

Jane Kennedy: Levonelle-2(c) is a prescription-only medicine licensed for emergency contraception that is available only under medical supervision. The licence does not specify a lower age limit for women but health care professionals are expected to satisfy themselves that treatment is in the patient's best interests and that she understands the advice she is receiving.

London Air Ambulance Service

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will require the Barts and the London NHS Trust to report to her *(a)* why the London air ambulance service is advertising for charitable donations, *(b)* what the cost was of the London air ambulance service in each of the last three years, *(c)* how many helicopters the service has, *(d)* how many staff are required to man the service and *(e)* whether the service operates 24 hours a day; and if she will make a statement. [2046]

Jane Kennedy: Air ambulances are provided through charitable organisations and therefore financial relationships between individual national health service trusts and charities will vary. The information requested is not held centrally.

The Department informed ambulance services and their commissioners in January 2002 that the cost of clinical staff on air ambulances should, from 1 April 2002, be met by the NHS on a continuing basis.

Maternity Services (HIV Treatment)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if her Department will issue guidance to the NHS that antenatal and maternity services, including HIV treatment to prevent mother-to-child transmission, must be made available to all women, regardless of their immigration status or ability to fund the treatment. [1549]

Mr. Byrne: A person who has formally applied for asylum is entitled to national health service treatment without charge for as long as their application (including appeals) is under consideration, including treatment for HIV and antenatal and maternity services.

Guidance on how to handle the provision of maternity services to women not ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom is contained in the document, "Implementing the Overseas Visitors Hospital Charging Regulations: Guidance for NHS Trust Hospitals in England", issued to all trusts in April 2004.

In response to a recommendation from the Health Select Committee in its recent report, "New Developments in Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Policy", the existing guidance was re-issued to trust overseas visitors managers on 16 May 2005. This confirmed that, because of the seriousness of potential risks to mother and baby, maternity services should be treated as immediately necessary treatments and provided without delay. This could include HIV treatment if considered clinically appropriate.

Mental Health

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the total number of people detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 *(a)* aged under 16 years and *(b)* aged between 16 years and 18 years, have been detained on adult psychiatric wards in the most recent period for which figures are available. [227]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not centrally available. Placing adolescents on adult psychiatric wards is sometimes necessary and acceptable for clinical and practical reasons. The children's national service framework (NSF) sets a standard that:

> '. . . young people who require admission to hospital for mental health care have access to appropriate care in an environment suited to their age and development'.

It advises that if a bed in an adolescent unit cannot be located for a young person, but that admission is essential for the safety and welfare of the user or others, then care may be provided on an adult ward for a short period.

The Government is committed to delivering the standards set out in the children's NSF.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with multiple sclerosis therapy centres about the cost of Healthcare Commission inspections; and if she will make a statement. [658]

Mr. Byrne: I have had no such discussions.

Myeloma

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the availability of treatments for myeloma; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure equal provision of drugs and other treatments for myeloma. [1050]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Treatments available for multiple myeloma are listed in the British National Formulary, which can be found at www.BNF.org

When a patient is being treated by a hospital, the consultant can arrange for the supply of any drug or substance, even one not normally available on a national health service prescription, provided the primary care trust (PCT) or NHS trust agrees to supply it at NHS expense.

In the case of recently licensed treatments, the Department has made it clear that funding should not be withheld because guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is unavailable. In these circumstances, the Department expects PCTs to take full account of the available evidence when reaching funding decisions.

The Government are committed to providing high-quality cancer services across the country, irrespective of cancer type. NICE has been commissioned to continue the "Improving Outcomes" series of guidance to ensure there is a comprehensive package of cancer services guidance covering all cancers.

The NICE guidance, "Improving Outcomes in Haematological Cancers", was published in October 2003 and addresses multiple myeloma.

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the consequences for cancer patients of the delays to the scheduled appraisal programme for 2006 of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence; [1997]

(2) why the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has insufficient funds to carry out its scheduled appraisal programme for 2006. [1998]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has made no specific assessment. It is sometimes necessary for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) to reschedule its appraisals for a variety of reasons. In August 1999, the Department issued Health Service Circular 1999/176, which asks national health service bodies to continue with local arrangements for the managed introduction of new technologies where guidance from NICE is not available at the time the technology first becomes available. These arrangements should involve an assessment of the available evidence.

NICE'S funding for 2005–06 is £29.9 million. The Department does not accept that NICE has insufficient funds to deliver its programme of work.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans her Department has to introduce a fast track National Institute for Clinical Excellence appraisal process to ensure cancer patients no longer have to wait for long periods before those treatments have been appraised; [2043]

(2) what plans her Department has to reduce the time it takes for National Institute for Clinical Excellence to appraise treatments that have shown to be safe and effective in clinical trials and licensed for use in the UK; and if she will make a statement; [2044]

(3) what plans her Department has to reduce the time it takes for National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to appraise vital cancer treatments; and if she will make a statement. [2045]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is an independent organisation, which develops its guidance after careful consideration of the available evidence and in consultation with stakeholders. The process by which it develops its guidance is a matter for NICE. Its processes have been developed through wide consultation, are transparent and have been endorsed by the World Health Organisation. NICE reviews its processes regularly in order to identify opportunities for efficiencies in the way they are applied.

NICE can only issue guidance on treatments that are licensed for use in the United Kingdom.

Neonatal Care

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to publish the Government's response to the Neonatal Intensive Care Review consultation. [1477]

Mr. Byrne: The neonatal intensive care review group was an expert group convened by the Department. Its findings were the subject of a consultation, which ended in July 2003. While there are no plans to publish a response to that consultation exercise, we have incorporated many of the lessons learned from it into the national service framework for children, young people and maternity services, published last year.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average occupancy rate for neonatal units was in each year since 2002. [1476]

Mr. Byrne: The occupancy rates in neonatal and children's beds were 59.7 per cent. in 2001–02, 59.6 per cent. in 2002–03 and 61.3 per cent. in 2003–04. For beds in neonatal intensive care wards the occupancy rates were 70.5 per cent. in 2001–02, 69.7 per cent. in 2002–03 and 72.7 per cent. in 2003–04. We do not yet have any figures for 2004–05.

Source:

Department of Health KH03 returns

NHS Administrators (Pay Rates)

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many administrators working in Hertfordshire NHS trusts receive pay in excess of £100,000 per annum; and if she will make a statement. [784]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally. However, the pay ranges for administrative and clerical staff, jointly working in national health service trusts in Hertfordshire, are shown in the table.

Salary and earnings for administrative and clerical staff on national[1] pay-scale, August 2002

£

	Average annualised actual	*Average full time annualised*[2]	*Lower quartile*[3]	*Upper quartile*[3]
Salary	14,300	14,000	11,400	16,100
Earnings	15,300	14,800	11,800	16,200

[1] Or their equivalents. Staff on local pay-scales are not included.

[2] Data uprated to reflect what would be earned should each individual work on a full time basis.

[3] Based on full time annualised salary and earnings.

Notes:

1. Figures rounded to the nearest 100.
2. The NHS earnings survey information is based on payroll data taken from a sample of approximately 50 per cent. of trusts during August.

Source:

Department of Health earnings survey.

Nurses

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to review the *(a)* pay and *(b)* working hours of nurses in the national health service. [567]

Mr. Byrne: In 2005–06, national health service nurses are subject to the last year of a three-year pay deal. The nurses and other health professions review body will review the pay rates of nurses for 2006–07 in due course. There are no plans at present to review the standard working week of 37.5 hours per week excluding meal breaks established by the "Agenda for Change" agreement in November 2004.

Nursing Homes

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average change in the fees charged by private sector nursing homes was in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003, *(c)* 2004 and *(d)* 2005; [409]

(2) what her assessment is of the effect regulations relating to nursing homes introduced in the last five years have had on fees charged by nursing homes; and if she will make a statement. [414]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect information on care home fees. However, for-profit nursing home fees between March 2000 and March 2004, from Laing and Buisson's "Care of Elderly People Market Survey 2004", are shown in the tables.

Private sector nursing homes are free to set their own prices. Price increases therefore reflect considerations such as the firm's required rate of return, as well as costs including the cost of other standards designed to protect users and their families. Local social service departments and the national health service pay for over two thirds of the cost of residential care, and significant extra resources have been made available as well.

Funding for social services has increased by 6 per cent. a year over the three years 2003–04 to 2005–06. These increases follow a 20 per cent. increase in the level of funding for social services between 1996–97 and 2002–03. This enables local councils to contract with providers at realistic prices.

Average weekly fees—private homes for older people, United Kingdom

£ per week

	March				
For-profit homes	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Nursing single room	387	399	427	464	508
Nursing shared room	356	370	393	421	436
Nursing weighted average	379	393	421	457	496

Year on year change in average weekly fee level, United Kingdom

percentage

Financial year April to March	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Nursing single room	+3.5	+6.4	+7.9	+7.4
Nursing shared room	+3.4	+5.6	+7.1	+7.4
Nursing weighted average	+3.5	+6.0	+7.8	+7.4

Ophthalmic Services

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she intends to begin the review of general ophthalmic services. [2279]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are preparing for the review and will make an announcement shortly.

Pharmaceuticals

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her latest estimate is of the gross *(a)* gain and *(b)* loss to the UK economy of parallel trade in pharmaceuticals; and if she will make a statement. [2275]

Jane Kennedy: In terms of the impact on national health service expenditure, information is not routinely collected on the source of products, but from the data currently available, the Department estimates that parallel imports saves the NHS in England approximately £60 million per year in the community sector. No estimate is available for the hospital sector.

Parallel importing is legal within the European Union. The United Kingdom parallel import licensing scheme allows medicinal authorised products in other EU member states to be marketed in the UK, provided the imported products have no therapeutic difference from the equivalent UK products.

The medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) liaises closely with the relevant competent authorities to obtain the necessary information to ensure that only those products which fully comply with the stringent criteria for parallel import are granted a licence. This information is published at monthly intervals on the MHRA website at www.mhra.gov.uk

Primary Care Trusts (Leeds)

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what change in funding has been determined for Leeds primary care trusts for 2006 to 2008. [2116]

Mr. Byrne: The latest round of primary care trust (PCT) allocations was announced on 9 February. The table shows the amounts allocated to Leeds PCTs.

Primary care trust	*2006–07 £000*	*Increase £000*	*Increase (Percentage)*	*2007–08 £000*	*Increase £000*	*Increase (Percentage)*
East Leeds	212,695	15,872	8.1	230,027	17,332	8.1
Leeds North East	192,073	14,345	8.1	207,743	15,670	8.2
Leeds North West	208,941	17,117	8.9	228,463	19,522	9.3
Leeds West	145,982	10,896	8.1	157,882	11,900	8.2
South Leeds	192,333	14,372	8.1	208,252	15,919	8.3

Prisoner Screening

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make it her policy to screen all prisoners on reception into prison for *(a)* hepatitis B and *(b)* hepatitis C. [1703]

Ms Rosie Winterton: All prisoners are given a health screening on first reception into custody to identify any who have immediate health needs or who are at a high risk of having a significant health problem. However, as in all other health settings, they are not compulsorily screened for blood borne viruses. The possibility of being tested for blood-borne viruses is likely to be raised with them on a number of subsequent occasions such as during health and drug education programmes, when seeing a drugs worker or while being counselled about hepatitis B vaccination. If, as a result, a prisoner requests a blood test, one will be arranged according to national health service guidelines.

Ritalin

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children have been prescribed Ritalin in each of the past 10 years. [1569]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not available in the form requested. The Department does not hold data on the number of people who receive medication. However, 359,100 prescription items of Methylphenidate Hydrochloride were dispensed in the community in England in 2004. Ritalin is one brand of the drug Methylphenidate, and accounted for 19 per cent. of the total number of items.

In 2004, it is estimated that around 90 per cent. of the 359,100 prescription items were dispensed in the community to children (children under 16 and young people aged 16 to 18 in full-time education). This proportion has been similar in recent years.

The table shows the total number of prescription items, in thousands, of the chemical entity Methylphenidate Hydrochloride that were dispensed in the community in England from 1995 to 2004, by product.

Number of prescription items in thousands

	Product					
	Ritalin	*Concerta*	*Equasym*	*Methylphenidate (generic)*	*Others*	*Total for chemical entity Methylphenidate Hydrochloride*
1995	14.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.7
1996	47.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.9
1997	92.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	92.1
1998	126.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	126.6
1999	157.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	158.0
2000	181.3	0.0	4.9	0.0	0.0	186.2
2001	180.6	0.1	27.7	0.1	0.0	208.5
2002	161.8	44.6	47.0	0.4	0.1	254.0
2003	124.5	134.9	54.5	0.3	0.2	314.5
2004	67.8	189.2	34.1	67.6	0.3	359.1

Source:
Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) data from the Prescription Pricing Authority

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice has been issued to *(a)* general practitioners and *(b)* consultants on the prescribing of Ritalin to children. [1570]

Jane Kennedy: Methylphenidate (Ritalin) is an amphetamine-like medicine, which is authorised as part of a comprehensive treatment programme for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children aged six years and older where remedial measures alone prove insufficient. It has controlled drug status, which imposes restrictions on prescribing and handling.

Guidance on prescribing and use of methylphenidate is provided in the summary of product characteristics (SPC) for health professionals and the British National Formulary issued to all doctors. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has also issued guidance on the use of methylphenidate for ADHD in childhood.

Both the SPC and NICE guidance include recommendations that treatment with methylphenidate should be under the supervision of a specialist in childhood behavioural disorders, children on methylphenidate should receive regular monitoring and treatment with methylphenidate should be periodically discontinued in order to assess the child's progress and the need for continuing with the medicine.

As with all medicines, the safety of methylphenidate is closely monitored by the Medical Healthcare products Regional Authority and the Committee on Safety of Medicines to ensure that prescribing guidance is accurate, up-to-date and supports the safe use of medicines.

Streptococcus Testing

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make it her policy to provide group B streptococcus testing on the NHS near the end of pregnancy; and if she will make a statement; [1822]

(2) what advice her Department has given to health care professionals on group B streptococcus testing during pregnancy; [1823]

(3) what research her Department has conducted into group B streptococcus testing during pregnancy. [1824]

Jane Kennedy: The current position is that routine screening of group B streptococcus should not be offered to all pregnant women. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's guideline on antenatal care states that:

> "Pregnant women should not be offered routine antenatal screening for group B streptococcus because evidence of its clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness remains uncertain".

The United Kingdom national screening committee (NSC) has commissioned an electronic learning resource for health care professionals from the national electronic library for health to promote the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' guideline on prevention of early onset neonatal group B streptococcal disease.

The NSC is also considering further research needs. As part of this, it has asked the health technology assessment programme to undertake two studies:

> Prenatal screening and treatment strategies to prevent group B streptococcal and other bacterial infections in early infancy: cost effectiveness and expected value of information analyses.
>
> Prenatal screening for group B streptococcal disease: protocol development for a possible clinical trial.

Tuberculosis

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prisoners were diagnosed as suffering from tuberculosis in the last year for which figures are available. [1828]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not routinely collected from prison establishments on the number of prisoners diagnosed as suffering from tuberculosis.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 7 June 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Badgers

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has for the post-mortem testing of badgers killed in road accidents in Staffordshire; and if she will make a statement. [1349]

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will *(a)* instruct the State Veterinary Service to carry out post-mortem tests on badgers killed on roads in Staffordshire and *(b)* ensure that the service is adequately funded to carry out such tests. [1321]

Mr. Bradshaw: Post-mortem testing of badgers killed in road accidents is carried out under the Road Traffic Accident (RTA) survey. This was established on the advice of the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISG) and is conducted in seven English counties (Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Dorset). The objective is to determine whether the RTA can provide an accurate indication of the prevalence of *Mycobacterium bovis* in badgers by comparing it with the data from the randomised badger culling trial.

We are awaiting the results of the validation of the survey in the badger culling trial areas before taking any decisions about extending the survey area further. There are also logistical and budgetary problems in extending the RTA survey.

Bovine TB

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much compensation has been paid to farmers in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England for cattle slaughtered under TB control policies in each year since 2001. [1067]

Mr. Bradshaw: The amount spent on bovine TB compensation for the last five financial years for *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England and the forecast for 2005–06, is given in the table:

£ million

Financial year	*(a) Wales actual expenditure*	*(b) England actual expenditure*
2000–01	1,288,350	5,715,490
2001–02	2,366,105	7,366,506
2002–03	8,881,841	26,075,860
2003–04	10,298,975	26,586,242
2004–05	9,810,000	24,141,733
2005–06	[1]9,300,000	[1]27,000,000

[1] Forecast

Livery Stables

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance she plans to make available to proprietors of livery stables to assist them in complying with the provisions of the Waste Management Licensing (England and Wales) (Amendment and Related Provisions) Regulations 2005. [1635]

Mr. Bradshaw: Guidance on the Waste Management Licensing (England and Wales) (Amendment and Related Provisions) Regulations 2005 (the 2005 regulations) will be published before the end of June.

Changes to the composting exemption from waste management licensing made in the 2005 regulations do not apply to the storage of manure. They apply to composting, that is, the active mixing of manure with other biodegradable waste to make compost.

Marine Bill

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what changes she plans to make to the *(a)* role and *(b)* jurisdictions of Sea Fisheries Committees, with particular reference to the proposed Marine Bill. [1491]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government have undertaken an extensive engagement process with stakeholders on recommendations on inshore fisheries management made by both the Strategy Unit report on the UK fishing industry ("Net benefits") and the Bradley review of fisheries and environmental management. The English Inshore Fisheries Working Group which met as part of that process reached agreement on an updated set of responsibilities and powers which would be needed to operate a modern, efficient system of inshore management and have submitted their report on this to me. Views in the working group were divided on the best structure to deliver inshore fisheries management.

The response of the four UK Fisheries Departments to the "Net Benefits" response will be published shortly, but we are currently further evaluating the options for the future structure of inshore fisheries management in England. Whatever the outcome of that consideration, there will be a need for legislation, at the minimum to update the current legislative framework for Sea Fisheries Committees. The proposed Marine Bill is likely to be the vehicle for introducing such changes.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what date she expects to publish the draft Marine Bill. [1492]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government have made a commitment to publish the draft Marine Bill in the first Session of this Parliament. We have yet to fix a specific date, but it is likely to be published during the later stages of the Session.

Recycling

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many recycling centres there are in England, broken down by *(a)* region and *(b)* type of facility. [1075]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is shown in the table:

Number of recycling sites[1]

Government office region	*Regional total*
East Midlands	1,764
Eastern	2,553
London	2,598
North East	588
North West	1,660
South East	3,402
South West	2,137
West Midlands	1,687
Yorkshire/Humber	1,631
Total	18,020

[1] Number of recycling sites under local authority control. Information on the number of sites run by other organisations such as charity shops or supermarkets is not available.

Water Meter Charges

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people were in receipt of the social tariff for water meter charges in each of the last three years. [1774]

Mr. Morley: The following table sets out the numbers of customers in receipt of the social tariff, otherwise known as the Vulnerable Groups Tariff, over the last three years for which figures are available, as collected by Ofwat.

	Successful applications
2003–04	7,202
2002–03	5,832
2001–02	4,716

These relate to the total number of successful applications across England and Wales (Welsh Water and Dee Valley Water offer the scheme voluntarily even though the Regulations do not apply to Wales).

Whaling

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with *(a)* the Government of Norway and *(b)* other Governments on the practice of whaling; and if she will make a statement. [675]

Mr. Bradshaw: The UK Government regularly make their opposition to whaling known to the Government of Norway. Officials will be raising the recent announcement of an increase in Norwegian whaling when they visit the country in the near future.

Together with Australia and New Zealand, we intend to make our opposition to Japanese 'scientific whaling' known in a forthcoming joint demarche.

Together with colleagues from the French and German embassies, HM ambassador in Reykjavik issued a statement on 24 May repeating our strong opposition to their continuing 'scientific whaling' programme.

I made our objections very clear with regard to Norwegian whaling and the Japanese and Icelandic 'scientific whaling', together with the extreme cruelty involved, following the BBC news feature on 9 May on Norwegian whaling.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

September Sittings

29. **Mr. Mackay:** To ask the Leader of the House what plans he has to bring forward proposals to change the arrangements for September sittings. [1943]

Nigel Griffiths: The House will not be sitting this September because of work required in the Chamber. The calendar for 2006 has not yet been decided.

Development in Africa

30. **Hugh Bayley:** To ask the Leader of the House what assessment he has made of the Work of Parliament and Development in Africa Working Party. [1944]

Nigel Griffiths: The establishment of the cross party working party on Parliament and Development in Africa last year reflects the strong interest which exists on both sides of this House in international development, and the role which parliamentarians can play. I welcome this.

Modernisation

31. **Mark Lazarowicz:** To ask the Leader of the House what plans he has for the further modernisation of the House of Commons. [1945]

Mr. Hoon: I believe there is scope for further modernisation in the way we do our business in this House, and I look forward to discussing with colleagues from all sides of the House how we can best take this forward.

I hope a motion re-establishing the Modernisation Committee will be tabled before the summer.

Pre-legislative Scrutiny

32. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Leader of the House if he will encourage Government Departments to subject all Bills in this and future Sessions to pre-legislative scrutiny. [1946]

Nigel Griffiths: The Government are committed to pre-legislative scrutiny, and have substantially increased the number of Bills published in draft. But it is not realistic to expect that all Bills should be published in draft for pre-legislative scrutiny: Parliament must be able to legislate quickly where there is a clear need, and constraints on drafting capacity place a limit on the number of Bills that can be produced in draft in any particular Session.

Public Understanding

33. **Julie Morgan:** To ask the Leader of the House what plans he has to make the business of the House more comprehensible to the public. [1947]

Mr. Hoon: There is certainly more to be done to make our proceedings in the House readily comprehensible, and accessible, to the public; and I am very willing to consider any suggestions from hon. Members on how this might best be done.

Parliamentary Questions

34. **Ben Chapman:** To ask the Leader of the House what plans he has to propose changes to the arrangements for the tabling of written parliamentary questions during the summer recess. [2018]

Nigel Griffiths: My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House has no plans to propose changes to current practice.

TRANSPORT

Coventry Airport

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Government are taking to tackle aircraft emissions at Coventry airport. [1268]

Ms Buck: The Government's policy on tackling aviation emissions is set out in chapter 3 of the Air Transport White Paper, published in December 2003. The Government have also introduced national objectives for air quality, set out in the National Air Quality Strategy and prescribed in the Air Quality Regulations 2000. Local authorities have a duty to assess the air quality in their areas against these objectives.

Crossrail

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 23 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 11W, (1) how many Crossrail trains per hour are planned to operate on the *(a)* Great Western Main Line and *(b)* Great Eastern Main Line (i) during peak hours, (ii) between peak hours and (iii) in the evenings; what forecast he has made of how much capacity, in terms of trains per hour, will remain for other passenger and freight trains during these periods; what the existing capacity is during these periods; and how these numbers compare with existing numbers of trains operated; [2104]

(2) what the maximum number of Crossrail trains per hour is for which priority powers are being sought in the Crossrail Bill; [2105]

(3) how much capacity, in terms of trains per hour, will remain for passenger and freight trains, other than Crossrail trains, if the maximum permitted number of Crossrail trains are operated; and what estimate he has made of changes to journey times for other passenger and freight trains on these routes if the maximum number of Crossrail trains are operated. [2106]

Derek Twigg: The following tables summarise the assumptions that have been made in developing Crossrail. Table 1 shows how many Crossrail trains per hour will operate in the central section between Paddington and Whitechapel. Table 2 shows how many Crossrail trains per hour will serve stations to the west of Paddington and to the east of Whitechapel for a corresponding frequency in the central section.

Table 1

	Trains per hour
Monday to Fridays	
Start to 07.00	12
07.00 to 07.45	20
07.45 to 09.15	24
09.15 to 10.00	20
10.00 to 16.00	16
16.00 to 16.45	20
16.45 to 18.15	24
18.15 to 19.00	20
19.00 to 21.00	16
21.00 to close	12
Saturdays	
Start to 09.00	12
09.00 to 21.00	16
21.00 to close	12
Sundays	
Start to 12.00	12
12.00 to 21.00	16
21.00 to close	12

Table 2

	Trains per hour service			
Station/section of route	*24*	*20*	*16*	*12*
Shenfield to Stratford	12	10	8	6
Abbey Wood to Isle of Dogs	12	10	8	6
Acton Main Line	4	4	4	4
Ealing Broadway	10	8	8	6
West Ealing	4	4	4	4
Hanwell	2	2	2	2
Southall	8	8	8	6
Hayes and Harlington	10	8	8	6
Heathrow Airport	4	4	4	4
West Drayton	6	4	4	2
Langley, Iver	4	4	4	2
Slough	4	4	4	2
Burnham, Taplow	4	2	2	2
Maidenhead	4	4	4	2

There could also be the following services that would not be part of the principal Crossrail passenger service but would be complementary to it:

(i) a service of up to six trains per hour between Gidea Park and Liverpool Street during the morning and evening rush hours; and

(ii) an all day service of between two and four trains per hour serving Reading, Slough and Paddington.

The capacity for non-Crossrail passenger services (other than existing suburban services subsumed by Crossrail or complementary services) and freight trains is largely unaffected for the following reasons.

For the Greater Western route Crossrail services will share use of two of the four tracks and will not displace services on to the other two tracks. So apart from periods of maintenance and disruption when services on all four tracks may need to be looked at together, there will be no impact from the operation of Crossrail on the two tracks that currently, and will continue to, carry all of the passenger services not subsumed into Crossrail and complementary services.

For the Great Eastern route the position is similar with Crossrail trains normally operating on the tracks currently carrying the local services subsumed into Crossrail services and not normally affecting the other two tracks.

In relation to freight, Crossrail service planning assumes that the current level of planned freight paths will continue. This allows for some growth in services run, since not all of the planned paths for freight are currently used on any given day. The Crossrail project includes a number of local infrastructure works specifically to facilitate continued freight operation.

This Bill does not specify a maximum number of principal Crossrail passenger service trains to which the use of powers in the Bill could apply. The Bill enables the Secretary of State to specify a minimum number of principal Crossrail passenger service trains. If the Secretary of State exercised this power he would do so taking account of all of his relevant rail and other policies, not simply the interests of Crossrail services in isolation.

Flight Path Changes (Consultation)

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many complaints he has received regarding poor consultation procedures for aircraft flight path changes. [2304]

Ms Buck: I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 25 May 2005, *Official Report,* column 123W, where I indicated that the Department does not maintain a noise complaints database. It does however regularly receive representations about aircraft flight paths. Most concerns relate to the effect of noise on correspondents. As part of this, some comment adversely on the way in which they became aware of changes. I am aware of a judicial review case on airspace changes affecting Suffolk.

Airspace changes are primarily the responsibility of the Directorate of Airspace Policy at the Civil Aviation Authority in the light of Guidance and Directions from the Secretary of State for Transport under section 66(1) of the Transport Act 2000. These are designed to ensure that changes are made only where it is clear, after consultation, that an overall environmental benefit will accrue, or where airspace management considerations and the overriding need for safety allow for no practical alternative.

Oxford/Bedford (Rail Link)

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress is being made on implementing the proposed rail link between Oxford and Bedford via Bletchley; and if he will make a statement. [1296]

Derek Twigg: The Strategic Rail Authority is taking part in the ODPM-sponsored East West Transport links study which is looking into the business case for the East West Rail scheme alongside other transport initiatives aimed at improving transport links in this corridor. The study will report this summer.

Safety Cameras

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many convictions were obtained by safety camera vans operating outside the conspicuity guidelines in *(a)* Barnsley, *(b)* Rotherham, *(c)* Doncaster and *(d)* the Pogmoor district of Barnsley in 2004–05; and how much revenue was raised in fines from these convictions. [1680]

Dr. Ladyman: Safety Camera Partnerships are responsible for the detailed operation of individual camera sites, as a police enforcement matter.

2004–05 revenues for the south Yorkshire partnership are currently being audited by the Audit Commission and will be published later in the year.

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the revenue from fines levied as a result of the activities of the South Yorkshire Safety Camera Partnership were in *(a)* Barnsley, *(b)* Rotherham, *(c)* Doncaster and *(d)* the Pogmoor district of Barnsley in each year since the partnership was established. [1682]

Dr. Ladyman: The information as requested is not available. The information for the South Yorkshire police force area for 2002–03 and 2003–04 is shown in the table.

	Tickets issued	*Revenue*
2002–03	15,814	948,840
2003–04	52,816	3,168,960

2004–05 revenues are currently being audited by the Audit Commission and will be published later in the year.

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many days in 2004–05 safety camera vans operated in *(a)* Barnsley, *(b)* Rotherham, *(c)* Doncaster and *(d)* the Pogmoor district of Barnsley. [1681]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not hold this information. Detailed information is available from partnerships, unless relating to police operational matters.

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the areas in which the South Yorkshire Safety Camera Partnership operates. [1683]

Dr. Ladyman: The partnership operates within the area of the South Yorkshire police, which covers Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield councils. Details of the camera sites operated in each of these four areas can be found on the partnership's website at www.safetycamera.org

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents involving *(a)* injury and *(b)* loss of life (i) have taken place in each year since the installation of speed cameras and (ii) took place in each of the five years before the installation of speed cameras at the site of each fixed speed camera on the Isle of Wight. [1448]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* The information requested is not held in the format required but the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Partnership have provided the information shown in the following table.

		Before camera establishment			After camera establishment		
Camera route/date established	*Years*	*Total injuries*	*Serious injuries*	*Fatal*	*Total injuries*	*Serious injuries*	*Fatal*
High Street, Wootton Bridge/1 July 2004	July to December 1999	2	0	0	—	—	—
	2000	5	2	0	—	—	—
Route length 1.0 km	2001	4	1	0	—	—	—
	2002	5	2	0	—	—	—
Speed limit 30 mph	2003	5	2	0	—	—	—
	January to June 2004	1	0	0	—	—	—
	July to December 2004	—	—	—	0	0	0
Total	—	22	7	0	0	0	0
Sandown Road, Shanklin/1 July 2004	July to December 1999	0	0	0	—	—	—
	2000	6	2	1	—	—	—
Route length 1.0 km	2001	3	1	0	—	—	—
	2002	3	0	0	—	—	—
Speed limit 30 mph	2003	5	0	0	—	—	—
	January to June 2004	3	0	0	—	—	—
	July to December 2004	—	—	—	4	0	0
Total	—	20	3	1	4	0	0
Newport Road, Lake/29 May 2003	June to December 1998	0	0	0	—	—	—
	1999	5	1	0	—	—	—
Route length 1.0 km	2000	4	1	0	—	—	—
	2001	7	1	0	—	—	—
Speed limit 30 mph	2002	4	0	0	—	—	—
	January to May 2003	0	0	0	—	—	—
	June to December 2003	—	—	—	3	1	0
	2004	—	—	—	3	1	0
Total	—	20	3	0	6	2	0
Victoria Avenue, Shanklin/1 July 2004	July to December 1999	0	0	0	—	—	—
	2000	2	1	0	—	—	—
Route length 1.0 km	2001	5	3	0	—	—	—
	2002	2	0	0	—	—	—
Speed limit 30 mph	2003	0	0	1	—	—	—
	January to June 2004	—	—	—	0	0	0
	July to December 2004	—	—	—	1	0	0
Total	—	9	4	1	1	0	0
Horsebridge Hill, Newport/29 May 2003	June to December 1998	3	0	0	—	—	—
	1999	18	6	0	—	—	—
Route length 1.85 km	2000	13	4	0	—	—	—
	2001	13	0	0	—	—	—
Speed limit 40 mph	2002	11	1	0	—	—	—
	January to May 2003	7	2	0	—	—	—
	June to December 2003	—	—	—	16	1	0
	2004	—	—	—	15	3	0
Total	—	65	13	0	31	4	0
St. Johns Hill, Ryde/29 May 2003	June to December 1998	6	2	0	—	—	—
	1999	3	2	0	—	—	—
Route length 1.0 km	2000	7	0	0	—	—	—
	2001	6	1	0	—	—	—
Speed limit 30 mph	2002	11	3	0	—	—	—
	January to May 2003	1	1	0	—	—	—
	June to December 2003	—	—	—	3	1	0
	2004	—	—	—	7	2	1
Total	—	35	9	0	10	3	0

WORK AND PENSIONS

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what his latest estimate is of the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of pensioners entitled to council tax benefit who do not receive it; and if he will make a statement; [1037]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the total of unclaimed means-tested benefits, including pensions, broken down by benefit, for the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [1038]

Mr. Plaskitt: The latest information available on the amount of unclaimed minimum income guarantee, income support, housing benefit, council tax benefit and income-based jobseeker's allowance, relates to financial year 2002–03 and is published in the DWP report entitled: "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up in 2002/2003". A copy of the report is available in the Library.

Disability Living Allowance

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he plans to simplify the application form for disability living allowance. [1467]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran to Annette Brooke, dated 1 June 2005:

I am writing in response to your recent Parliamentary question in which you asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he plans to simplify the application form for disability living allowance (DLA).

The Disability Carers Service (DCS) is committed to reviewing and improving the services and products we offer to our customers in consultation with customer representative organisations. This includes looking at ways in which we can simplify our claim packs and address the concerns that our customers have about the difficulties they experience in claiming disability benefits.

We have recently developed and tested a shortened version of the DLA claim pack but after careful consideration, have concluded that a more "structured" claim form is appropriate. This could be personalised to obtain information about an individual's care and mobility needs arising from their disabilities. The draft "structured" claim form is being designed in line with National Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee recommendations on reviewing and improving Government forms, and through consultation with our customer representative organisations. We intend to pilot the form in the Autumn of this year and will, in conjunction with our customer representatives, be evaluating it for ease of completion and general understanding as well as other criteria.

I hope this information is helpful.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Broadcasting Reception (Rossendale and Darwen)

Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects *(a)* Channel 5 and *(b)* Freeview television to be available throughout Rossendale and Darwen. [1775]

James Purnell: We do not have a breakdown of coverage by constituency but Digital Television (DTT) coverage maps have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Freeview also provide a comprehensive postcode database (www.freeview.co.uk) that gives availability of DTT throughout the UK.

The current availability of Freeview is restricted in much of the constituency because of the local terrain which means that, until switchover, the local transmitter at Winter Hill can only broadcast signals at low strength. At switchover, I expect the power of these signals to be increased significantly.

Similarly, Winter Hill carries Channel 5 at a reduced power compared to the first four channels, and the areas reliant on the relay transmitter network will not be able to receive it until switchover.

Gaelic/Welsh Language Broadcasting

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her Department's policy on contributing towards the cost of a Gaelic language television channel. [1301]

James Purnell: Exchequer funding for Gaelic broadcasting is principally through the Scottish Executive's support for the Gaelic Media Service (GMS). Funding of £8.5 million for the GMS was transferred from the Secretary of State for Scotland to the Scottish Executive in 1999. Gaelic language broadcasting is also undertaken by the BBC in radio and television and by ITV1 in Scotland.

We are working with all the parties concerned to secure a better deal for Gaelic broadcasting and to help achieve that, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State recently proposed a contribution of £250,000 directly from DCMS budgets.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding the Department plans to provide for *(a)* Gaelic language broadcasting in Scotland and *(b)* Welsh language broadcasting in Wales in financial years (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08. [1585]

James Purnell: Gaelic language broadcasting is provided by the BBC on radio and television and are a statutory requirement on ITV1 in Scotland; production is funded by the broadcasters and by the Gaelic Media Service (GMS); the funding of £8.5 million for the GMS was transferred from the Secretary of State for Scotland to the Scottish Executive as part of the devolution settlement in 1999. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has also offered a contribution of £250,000 directly from DCMS budgets in 2005–06 as part of the strategy for securing a Gaelic television channel.

Welsh language broadcasting is provided by the BBC on radio and the Welsh Fourth Channel Authority on S4C television. Funding for S4C continues to fall within my Department's budget and is determined according to a statutory formula: provision is currently set at £92.217 million for 2005–06 and 2006–07 and £92.817 million for 2007–08.

Lord Hollick

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what performance indicators are used to assess the performance of Lord Hollick in his role as chairman of the South Bank Centre. [1232]

Tessa Jowell: Lord Hollick's performance is assessed against the following criteria:

Leadership;

Setting a clear strategic direction;

Partnership working; and

Media handling and representation.

In reappointing Lord Hollick to the Chair's post this year, assessments of his performance were sought by my Department from Arts Council England and other South Bank Board members, as well as from relevant officials at the Department itself. All individuals reappointed to DCMS NDPBs are assessed against similar criteria.

SCOTLAND

Local Income Tax

7. **David Mundell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the likely costs to the Inland Revenue of administering a local income tax in Scotland. [1954]

David Cairns: Scotland Office Ministers have regular discussions on a range of issues with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

G8 Summit

8. **Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the Foreign Office and *(b)* the Scottish Executive concerning measures to promote Scotland during the G8 summit in Perthshire. [1955]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs discuss many matters. Scotland Office Ministers are also in regular contact with the Scottish First Minister, with whom we discuss a wide range of issues.

Employment (Glasgow)

9. **Mr. Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he will next meet the new leader of Glasgow City Council to discuss levels of employment in the city. [1956]

David Cairns: I hope to meet Councillor Steven Purcell, the new leader of Glasgow City Council, later this month to discuss a range of issues relating to the city.

Advocate General (Devolution)

10. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent devolution issues the Advocate General has considered. [1957]

Mr. Darling: In the time since her last parliamentary questions on 15 March, the Advocate General has had 327 devolution issues intimated to her. 275 of these were concerned with civil matters and the remaining 52 with criminal matters. Most of the civil cases concerned prison conditions. Almost half of the criminal cases concerned pre-trial delay. The Advocate General has not considered it necessary or appropriate to intervene, at this stage, in any of the devolution issues intimated to her since 15 March.

Oil and Gas

11. **Miss Begg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he plans to meet the Minister for Energy in the Department for Trade and Industry to discuss developments in the Scottish oil and gas industry. [1958]

David Cairns: Scotland Office Ministers and officials are in touch with their counterparts in the Department for Trade and Industry regularly on a range of energy issues. I expect to meet the Minister for Energy and representatives of the oil and gas industry at next week's meeting of the PILOT group.

Fuel Costs

12. **Danny Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on financial measures to relieve the burden of fuel costs in remote and rural areas of Scotland. [1959]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend has regular discussions with the Chancellor on a wide range of issues.

Ferry Subsidy

13. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met Transport Ministers in the Scottish Executive to discuss ferry subsidies. [1960]

Mr. Darling: I have regular discussions with Ministers in the Scottish Executive on a range of transport issues. Assistance for ferry services and the level of subsidy provided are devolved matters for decision by the Scottish Parliament and Executive.

Regeneration (Lanarkshire)

14. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on further financial measures to continue regeneration in the County of Lanarkshire. [1961]

David Cairns: Scotland Office Ministers have regular discussions on a range of issues with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The

Government recognise that the continued regeneration of the Lanarkshire area, like many other areas, is of crucial importance to both its people and the wider national economy. Many Lanarkshire wards currently benefit from their Enterprise Area status, which brings together a range of Government policies to provide support for businesses in creating jobs, opportunities and prosperity. These efforts will reinforce the work of the Scottish Executive and Scottish Enterprise Lanarkshire and help to ensure that all communities benefit from our continuing economic prosperity.

Constitutional Change

15. **Jim Sheridan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what further constitutional changes that affect Scotland are planned for this parliamentary Session. [1962]

Mr. Darling: The Government have no plans to reopen the general division between devolved and reserved matters under the Scottish devolution settlement. Neither are there plans to change constitutional arrangements more generally. Elements in some of the Bills recently announced in the Queen's Speech will have an impact on devolved matters in Scotland. These are being handled through the normal arrangements whereby the UK Parliament does not legislate on devolved matters without the consent of the Scottish Parliament.

Energy Supply

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on security of energy supply in Scotland. [1277]

David Cairns: Security of supply must always be a core objective of energy policy. We will utilise a wide variety of traditional and new sources of energy and the fullest range of technological developments in order to maintain the future reliability of supplies throughout the UK, while also reducing carbon emissions to combat climate change.

The major responsibilities for overall energy policy affecting Scotland are reserved to UK Ministers. Scottish Executive Ministers have devolved responsibilities for promotion of renewables and encouraging energy efficiency which are central to security of supply. The Government and the devolved administration are committed to expanding use of renewable energy sources. This applies to proven technologies for onshore wind and to developing technologies to capture Scotland's abundant marine energy resources.

The Government welcome the interest which the Scottish Affairs Committee has taken in Scotland's future energy needs and will respond in due course to the report which they published shortly before Parliament was dissolved. We also welcome the independent inquiry launched last month by the Royal Society of Edinburgh into energy supply and demand in Scotland to 2050.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Kamel Bourgass

Harry Cohen: To ask the Solicitor-General on what grounds the Crown Prosecution Service withdrew charges against Kamel Bourgass and co-defendants of conspiring to make chemical and biological weapons and substituted conspiracy to cause a public nuisance; for what reasons Government lawyers requested an order requiring no reporting of the charge of making chemical weapons being dropped at the time; and if he will make a statement. [1853]

The Solicitor-General: I am advised that the initial charges of conspiracy to manufacture chemical weapons were based upon preliminary indications that traces of ricin were present on articles recovered during searches made of premises occupied by Mr Kamel Bourgass and others. However, it was later confirmed by scientists from Porton Down that the articles did not contain such traces.

In any event, upon a full review of the case papers it was concluded that other offences properly reflected the totality of the alleged offending behaviour.

Charges of conspiracy to murder and to cause a public nuisance were therefore substituted. I am told that the prosecution did not apply for an order restricting reporting in relation to the dropping of the charge.

Theft

John Hemming: To ask the Solicitor-General what the policy of the Crown Prosecution Service is relating to the prosecution for first offences of theft from the person; and if he will make a statement. [1615]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) reviews all cases in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors. Crown prosecutors consider whether there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction' and if such evidence exists, whether it is in the public interest to prosecute the accused. A prosecution will usually take place unless there are public interest factors tending against prosecution, which clearly outweigh those tending in favour, or it appears more appropriate to divert the person from prosecution. The public interest decision will depend upon all the circumstances of the offence and the background of the offender.

In respect of adults, diversionary options include informal warnings, cautions, and, in some places, conditional warnings. A caution will only be appropriate when the public interest accords with the Home Office's guidelines on cautioning.

In respect of youths, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 established a diversion scheme to prevent re-offending by children and young people, who are issued with reprimands or final warnings aimed at diverting them from crime before they enter the formal court system. This scheme, which replaced the previous system of repeat cautioning, provides a response, with appropriate interventions to reduce re-offending. Although the CPS may be consulted during the course of an enquiry if officers want to seek advice on the correct charge, the decision whether or not to issue a reprimand or final warning is for the police.

Since the introduction of this scheme, the Home Office has issued detailed guidance to the police forces in England and Wales on the application of the legislation to ensure national consistency. It provides a number of options enabling a reprimand or final warning to be administered to a youth, depending on the seriousness of the offence. The police are guided to the appropriate resolution by the identification of a number of gravity factors in the case. A caution or final warning may be an appropriate disposal where a youth without previous convictions or cautions commits an offence, fully admits it and shows appropriate remorse. A very large percentage of young people who are the subject of the diversion scheme do not re-offend.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Air Conditioning

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what the estimated average *(a)* energy use, *(b)* direct greenhouse gas emissions and *(c)* indirect greenhouse gas emissions were for air conditioning systems to cool domestic homes in the last year for which figures are available; [1502]

(2) if he will estimate how many homes in the United Kingdom have domestic air conditioning installed; and in what proportion of homes it is estimated under current projections of growth systems will have been installed by *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2020 and *(c)* 2050. [1503]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

It is estimated that current indirect (via electricity generation) carbon emissions from air-conditioning in homes are in the range 20 to 80 kT of carbon per year.

This represents estimated annual electricity consumption of between 195,000 and 780,000 MWh.

The global warming effect of direct emissions depends on the refrigerants used, and on the proportion emitted to the atmosphere by leakage, during servicing or on disposal. It is estimated that the direct impact of emissions from air-conditioning in homes is the equivalent of between one and seven kT of carbon per year, depending on the assumptions made for these factors.

There are limited statistics on the number of air-conditioning systems in UK homes, but the figure is believed to be of the order of 500,000. These are much smaller systems than would be found in larger buildings. Many of them are portable units sold "over the counter". The annual usage of the systems is also uncertain. Emissions and energy use estimates therefore have a wide range of uncertainty. Estimates of the future stock of air-conditioning in homes, based on continuation of current trends are 2005, 0.5 million; 2010, 0.7 million; 2020, 1.1 million; 2050, 2.3 million. In practice, sales will be affected by the pricing and marketing policies of suppliers, household wealth, weather (including perceptions of climate change) and energy efficiency policy measures.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research *(a)* has been conducted and *(b)* planned into the contribution to future climate change emissions made by air conditioning in domestic homes. [1504]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

Defra has recently commissioned research to update estimates of direct fluorinated gas historic and projected emissions (1990–2025) from the UK refrigeration and air conditioning sectors. This work, which is still in progress, is being performed under Defra's contract with AEA Technology plc for the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory. As part of this study, an assessment will be made as to whether it will be possible to estimate emissions separately for domestic air conditioning units, as at present only a single emission estimate is calculated for a wider equipment category.

Several measures are in place or under consideration to address indirect emissions, which arise through electricity consumption:

Reducing cooling need.

> Building regulations already include requirements aimed at limiting overheating in new housing. These are currently being reviewed as part of the general revision of the Regulations;

Encouraging the use of efficient equipment.

> Domestic air-conditioners are required to carry energy performance labels. (Mandatory minimum performance standards exist outside Europe, but not within the EU). Ways of including air-conditioning energy use within the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) are being investigated. SAP defines the energy performance of a dwelling for Building Regulations purposes and for the building energy performance certification required by the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive;

Encouraging wise use.

> Energy consumption can be affected greatly by the way in which users operate systems but there is little empirical information on actual use. Field measurements of the annual usage of domestic air-conditioning are in progress at University College, London.

British Summer Time

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will assess the merits of extending British Summer Time in England and Wales so that it remains in force all year. [1627]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* As there is not a clear public desire for any particular change, I am not persuaded that a change to our existing arrangements would be in the best interests of the UK.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations have been received on British Summer Time by his office during the past five years; and how many of these were in favour of continuing British Summer Time throughout the year. [1628]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* The Department receives representations on British Summer Time from time-to-time. These reflect the divergence of opinion that exists on this issue and indicate that there is no clear public desire for any particular change.

Business Support (Hertfordshire)

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to encourage the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* growth of small and medium enterprises in Hertfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [771]

Alun Michael: The Department for Trade and Industry sponsors the East of England Development Agency (BEDA) to develop and pursue a Regional Economic Strategy and contribute to achievement of the Government's Public Service Agreement targets. EEDA provides funding for Hertfordshire Business Link and Hertfordshire Economic Partnership to help existing businesses to grow and new businesses to be created.

An extensive range of support and services is provided including the provision of business information, helping clients access and secure appropriate finance, supporting businesses with people issues and building managerial capacity.

Other support includes helping clients embrace technology, overcoming technical/manufacturing issues and securing new customers particularly in overseas markets.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures he is taking to encourage *(a)* national and *(b)* international investment in Hertfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [774]

Alun Michael: The Department for Trade and Industry sponsors the East of England Development Agency (BEDA) to develop and pursue a Regional Economic Strategy and contribute to achievement of the Government's Public Service Agreement targets. EEDA supports national and international investment in Hertfordshire both directly and through funding the activities of other agencies, working in partnership with UK Trade and Investment.

EEDA provides grants directly to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises for research and development.

EEDA also provides funding to the following:

East of England International (EEI) which identifies and attracts global mobile projects to invest in the East of England and also provides support to existing foreign owned businesses in the region. In the seven years since the inward investment agency was established it has secured 34 foreign inward investment successes for the county.

Hertfordshire Future which provides a range of services for foreign owned businesses in Hertfordshire to complement EEFs activities.

The Hertfordshire Business Incubation Centre, which is creating new businesses through spin-offs from academia and the larger technology based businesses.

Correspondence

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what legal advice was sought over the implications of the undated UDM letter, reference CNW/REG/VWF, faxed to his Department on 24 May by the hon. Member for Bassetlaw, when the letter was first seen by his Department. [1481]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* When the letter (Ref: CNW/REG/VWF) was first brought to its attention in December 1999 the Department sought legal advice from its external lawyers advising in relation to the VWF Scheme. The advice received was that further inquiries should be made before a decision as to what action to take was made. Having received that advice further inquiries were undertaken of the UDM. The UDM assured the Department that the letter related to a very limited number of Claimants who were part of a pilot group who had, for operational reasons and with the agreement of the DTI, undertaken the VWF MAP report process twice. The UDM acknowledged that it had been wrong to issue the letter and gave the Department assurances both as to its limited use and its unconditional withdrawal. The Department also made inquiries of its Claims Handlers at the time in relation to the cases affected having received the UDM's explanation and having reconsidered the advice from its legal advisers in the light of the information received from its Claims Handlers the Department chose to take no immediate action either against the UDM or any individual Claimant, but to keep under very close review the potential for the coaching of claimants.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when his Department received the letter from the Union of Democratic Mineworkers, reference cnw/reg/vwf; and what response was made to the letter. [1777]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* The Department was passed a copy of the letter in December 1999. Subsequently we wrote to the UDM who assured the Department that only 41 claimants had received copies of the letter. This cohort of claimants had undergone a Medical Assessment Process (MAP) examination for Vibration White Finger but because the UDM had raised concerns about a particular consultant they asked for 41 claimants seen by this consultant to undergo a second MAP examination. It was in between these two examinations that the letter was sent. The Department's claims handlers reviewed all 41 claims and they considered that the letter had had no impact on the results of the examinations.

Energy Policy

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to ensure that officials in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are invited to comment on policy advice he receives from his officials on energy matters; and if he will ensure that such comments are made available to him on a regular basis. [1524]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* Energy matters are discussed by Ministers and officials regularly, in particular through the sustainable energy policy network, whose ministerial group oversees the delivery of the Energy White Paper commitments. The group is jointly chaired by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

European Law

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effects of ECJ ruling C-88/04, 2005/C 45/21, OJ C45 of 19 February 2005; and if he will make a statement. [492]

Barry Gardiner: The judgment of the European Court of Justice in case C-88/04 concerns non-implementation in Gibraltar of Directive 2001/29/EC on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society. The Government's response to the ruling foreshadowed implementation in Gibraltar early in 2005 and the European Commission has since been notified of the entry into force of this legislation. The Directive was implemented in the United Kingdom by Statutory Instrument (2003) No. 2498 which came into force on 31 October 2003 (The Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003).

Export Control Advisory Committee

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which *(a)* companies, *(b)* organisations and *(c)* trade associations are represented on the Export Control Advisory Committee. [943]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 26 May 2005]*: The CBI; NEC UK; Engineering Employers Federation; UK Steel; the Defence Manufacturers' Association; the Society of British Aerospace Companies Ltd.; GAMBICA; Chemical Industries Association; Manufacturing Technologies Association; the Defence Industries Council; Intellect (Federation of Electronic Industries); the Gun Trade Association; UK Universities; the Royal Society; the UK Industrial Space Committee; the British Chambers of Commerce; and the Export Group for Aerospace and Defence (EGAD). Also, DTI, MOD, FCO, DfID and HM Revenue and Customs.

Export Control Organisation

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what functions of the Export Control Organisation have been *(a)* identified as suitable and *(b)* confirmed for private sector partner involvement. [944]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 26 May 2005]*: The Department is still considering the options and no decisions have been taken on which functions, if any, might involve private sector partners.

Media Distribution

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on new arrangements for distribution of newspapers and magazines to retailers and consumers under the proposals announced by the Office of Fair Trading. [1272]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is for the companies concerned to make decisions about what distribution arrangements they put in place for the supply of newspapers and magazines. I hope the work undertaken by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to consider the compatibility with competition law of current arrangements for the distribution of newspapers and magazines will help those companies ensure their arrangements comply with the law. The OFT's findings on this matter were announced in February and have now been published in detail as a draft advisory opinion. Substantive observations on OFT's draft advisory opinion should be submitted to OFT by 17 June 2005.

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the process by which deadlines are set for correspondence handling by Capita as contractors in handling coal health claims. [1598]

Malcolm Wicks: Deadlines for correspondence handling by the Department's coal health claims handling contractor are part of the service specification in the contract with Capita. Correspondence is generally required to be answered within 10 working days.

Nuclear Industry

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much and what percentage of public expenditure on energy research and development was spent on research and development for *(a)* nuclear fission, *(b)* nuclear fusion, *(c)* fossil fuel generation and *(d)* renewable energy sources in each year since 1997. [170]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 23 May 2005]*: The table sets out the expenditure of the DTI and research councils on research and development for nuclear fission, fusion, fossil fuel generation and renewables between 1997–98 and 2004–05.

								£million
	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
Nuclear fission	1.04	1.68	2.56	0.13	2.32	2.41	2.31	2.32
Nuclear fusion	16.6	12.6	14.3	17.0	14.4	14.6	15.63	19.53
Fossil fuel generation	3.43	3.0	2.61	4.85	5.52	4.35	6.25	8.13
Renewable energy[2]	13.7	15.0	14.39	15.46	18.82	24.40	29.07	25.16
Other[3]	1.73	1.87	2.00	2.07	2.27	2.65	1.97	4.86

[1] Estimated spend with some elements not included

[2] Includes full range of renewables and also Research Council spend on carbon capture, energy storage and networks

[3] Includes energy efficiency

In addition further research relating to energy is included in the work of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research which has some £310 million funding from research councils over 2000–05, and in the work of the Carbon Trust. The UK also participates in international collaborative energy research via the EU and the International Energy Agency.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many potential threats as defined by the Nuclear Industries Security Regulations 2003 have occurred at each licensed nuclear installation since 1 January 2004. [2081]

Malcolm Wicks: The Nuclear Industries Security Regulations 2003 do not define potential threats. Section 10 of the regulations requires the reporting of security incidents: details of those incidents reported to the Office for Civil Nuclear Security for 2004 are at:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/about/foi/documents/ocns.pdf

DEFENCE

Aldermaston

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the relationship is between the new building programme at the AWRE Aldermaston and the next generation British nuclear weapons. [1554]

Mr. Ingram: Developments at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston are consistent with the policy set out in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review and in the December 2003 Defence White Paper (Cm 6041–1). Such developments include the sustainment of the capabilities necessary to meet safety, environmental and operational requirements and to keep open options in respect of any decision on whether or not to replace Trident.

Armed Forces (Recruitment)

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on recruitment rates to the armed forces. [1778]

Mr. Touhig: Over the last three years armed forces recruitment has been buoyant. In financial year 2004–05 there were 17,560 new entrants. This represented 96 per cent. of the overall armed forces recruiting target for the financial year.

Detainees (Treatment)

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what legal advice the Government have taken concerning the obligations of intelligence personnel to report abuse of detainees in US custody; [512]

(2) what legal advice the Government have taken concerning the obligations of intelligence personnel *(a)* to report and *(b)* to intervene to stop breaches of the Geneva Conventions at US interrogation facilities. [513]

Mr. Ingram: As a matter of policy, any such breaches witnessed by United Kingdom personnel would be reported through the UK chain of command to the US chain of command, at the appropriate level. Legal advice informing this policy is subject to legal privilege.

United Kingdom defence intelligence personnel are required to report any such breaches through the UK chain of command to the US chain of command, at the appropriate level. Legal advice informing this policy is subject to legal privilege.

Forces Personnel Reductions

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it remains the policy of his Department to implement all the reductions in the *(a)* Royal Navy, *(b)* Army and *(c)* Royal Air Force announced prior to the 2005 general election. [1557]

Mr. Ingram: Yes. The 'Future Capabilities' Command Paper, published last July, set out the changes we will make to both force structures and capabilities.

Life-expired Ordnance

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what precautions his Department takes to ensure that life-expired ordnance transported by rail and road to Shoeburyness for demolition is not exposed to the possibility of detonation by terrorist or other criminal attack. [1351]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* During the carriage by road and rail of life expired ordnance, the Ministry of Defence fully complies with the safety and security requirements of SI 2004 No. 568 (The Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2004 (The Carriage Regulations)), Regulations Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID) and The European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR). Additional security measures assessed to the level of threat are also imposed.

It is not MOD policy to declare the specific details of security arrangements imposed during the carriage of life expired ordnance.

Nepal

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the UK Government intend to resume military assistance to Nepal. [1595]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement issued by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on 25 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 17WS, which, interalia, refers to the departmental minute laid by this Department regarding the intended resumption of military assistance to Nepal.

Project Connaught

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects work to begin on the re-provisioning of military facilities in Aldershot under Project Connaught. [1119]

Mr. Touhig: Contract negotiations are proceeding with Aspire, the Preferred Bidder for Project Allenby/Connaught. On current plans we would expect construction in Aldershot to start early in 2006.

Scottish Infantry Regiments

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has undertaken a review of the proposed mergers of the Scottish infantry regiments since taking up his position. [1499]

Mr. Ingram: No. The changes to the infantry announced by the previous Defence Secretary last year are part of a wider restructuring of the Army. These changes represent the right way forward for the Army; they will make it more robust and resilient, and better able to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

Service Personnel (General Election)

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the UK armed forces were stationed in Iraq during the general election; and how many were provided with *(a)* proxy and *(b)* postal votes. [902]

Mr. Touhig: There were approximately 9300[1] service personnel in Iraq, or overseas in support of operations in Iraq, on land and at sea, in May 2005. It is not possible to determine how many service personnel used a proxy to exercise their vote and how many applied for and used a postal vote.

[1] Rounded to the nearest 100.

Territorial Army

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many Territorial Army soldiers mobilised under section *(a)* 54 and *(b)* 56 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 since 1 March 2003 have not been deployed to an overseas operational theatre; [1246]

(2) how many Territorial Army soldiers have been mobilised under section *(a)* 52, *(b)* 54 and *(c)* 56 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 since 1 March 2003; [1247]

(3) whether it is his policy to mobilise members of the Territorial Army under sections 54 or 56 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 to occupy United Kingdom-based posts left vacant by members of the regular Army on operational services overseas. [1273]

Mr. Touhig: I can confirm that since 1 March 2003: there have been no Territorial Army (TA) soldiers mobilised under Section 52 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996; some 500 TA soldiers have been mobilised under Section 56; and some 9,820 TA soldiers have been mobilised under Section 54. Of the soldiers mobilised under Section 54, some 290 personnel have not deployed to operational theatres and these include: enablers at the Reserves Training and Mobilisation Centre; unit and welfare support staff, who provide a vital liaison role in the home bases of TA units, whose members have been mobilised and deployed; movement control specialists at the Air and Sea Ports of embarkation; Intelligence Analysts; staff officers working in direct support of operations but based in the United Kingdom, and Royal Engineers providing Explosive Ordnance Disposal support in the UK. In addition, it is possible for individuals to be mobilised to fill posts left vacant by members of the regular Army serving on operations. However, in general it is our policy to use Reservists contracted on Full Time Reserve Service terms to fill such posts.

Tomahawk Missiles

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of the practicability of *(a)* fitting and *(b)* retro-fitting Type 45 destroyers with tactical Tomahawk missiles. [1556]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Procurement Agency conducted an assessment in 2004 of the potential to fit tactical Tomahawk missiles to the Type 45 destroyer. This assessment was one of a number carried out from time to time to consider alternative options for delivering best value military capability. Although this assessment confirmed the practicability of either fitting or retro-fitting Tomahawk missiles it remains the position that there is currently no requirement for the Type 45 to be fitted with them.

Trident

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it remains his policy that the decision to replace Trident with the next generation of the strategic nuclear deterrent will be taken before the end of this Parliament. [1553]

John Reid: The December 2003 Defence White Paper (Cm 6041, paragraph 3.11) indicated that it was likely that decisions on whether to replace Trident would be needed during this Parliament. As I said on 18 May 2005 during the Foreign Affairs and Defence Debate on the Gracious Speech, *Official Report*, column 247, that continues to be the case.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what preliminary assessments his Department has made of the relative merits of *(a)* extending the life of Trident and *(b)* replacing Trident with an entirely new system. [1555]

John Reid: We have previously made clear that, in advance of decisions on whether to replace Trident, which are likely to be needed in this Parliament, we will continue to take appropriate steps to ensure that the range of options for maintaining a nuclear deterrent capability is kept open. We have not yet made an assessment of the relative merits of such options. We previously indicated on 30 June 2004, *Official Report*, column 358W, that we routinely undertake studies into the optimum operational life of key defence capabilities, including the Trident system, and that these have included concept studies on options for platforms to carry the Trident missile in the longer term.

TREASURY

Block Grant (Wales)

Ian Lucas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what sum has been reported to Her Majesty's Treasury as total public expenditure within the assigned budget by the *(a)* former Welsh Office and *(b)* National Assembly for Wales in each year since 1997, for the purposes of assessing the block grant for Wales under the Barnett formula. [1282]

Mr. Des Browne: Details of calculation of the block grant payable to the Welsh Assembly Government and its relationship with Total Managed Expenditure in Wales can be found in the Wales Office Annual Report.

Customs and Excise

Mr. Beith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what changes have been made in the duties carried out by the Customs and Excise officer in Berwick-upon-Tweed in respect of *(a)* customs duties and *(b)* immigration; and where that officer is to be based. [1164]

Dawn Primarolo: The Revenue and Customs officer based in Berwick did, until recently, spend approximately one third of his time on customs work, including some agency work on behalf of the immigration service.

The nature of this work has changed in recent years and over 90 per cent. of customs clearance at the frontier now takes place immediately, thanks to the very large increase in electronic trading. Fiscal control is increasingly carried out by inland audit. general customs detection activity in the Berwick area is intelligence led, according to risk, and this activity is now covered by a flexible team based in Newcastle, who are also responsible for mandatory examinations.

There were a number of meetings with the trade to explain the changes and resolve early teething problems, including one in February 2005 attended by trade representatives from Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Revenue and Customs are entering discussions with the immigration service, who will need to make alternative arrangements to cover their activities in Berwick.

The Custom House at Berwick closes on 21 June 2005. The officer has been provided with facilities in Revenue and Customs' building in Alnwick. Following the changes in duties outlined above, the officer will be working on taxation (VAT) duties, supporting the trading population in the area (this work has in fact been a considerable proportion of his duties for the last 12 months).

Millionaires

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many persons are taxed on the basis of incomes of over £1 million a year before allowances; and how many were taxed at that level on that basis in each of the last 10 years. [1601]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* The information is given in the table as follows:

Number of taxpayers with total income of at least £1 million

	Number: thousand Income taxpayers
1995–96[1]	0.7
1996–97[1]	2
1997–98[1]	2
1998–99[1]	3
1999–2000[1]	3
2000–01[1]	5
2001–02[1]	5
2002–03[1]	4
2003–04[2]	4
2004–05[2]	5
2005–06[2]	6

[1] Estimates based on Survey of Personal Incomes

[2] Estimates based on the 2002–03 Survey of Personal Incomes projected forward in line with Budget 2005 assumptions.

Tax credits (Birmingham)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many non-pensioner families in Birmingham were recipients of tax credits in the last three years; and how many have been identified as having received overpayments. [1877]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* The information requested on non-pensioner families is not available. HMRC statistical publications show estimates of the number of in-work families in each region, local authority and constituency with tax credits awards at selected dates since July 2003. They also show estimates of the number of 2003–04 awards to families in each such area, and the number of these that were overpaid at 5 April 2004 after finalisation. The estimates are based on samples and are subject to significant sampling uncertainty. The publications can be found on the HMRC website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academic Boycotts

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Hertsmere of 23 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 5W, on Academic Boycott (Israel), what mechanisms the Government have used to make clear their opposition to academic boycotts; and whether these have included discussions with individual academics. [2022]

Bill Rammell: We have most recently stated our opposition to academic boycotts, via press releases from Dr. Howells, the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Government have not engaged in discussions with individual academics on this matter.

Action Zones (Pupil Achievement)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what evaluation has been carried out on the impact of *(a)* education action zones and *(b)* Excellence in Cities action zones on (i) social or economic disadvantage in the area, (ii) levels of pupil achievement, (iii) unauthorised absence and (iv) exclusion; [2313]

(2) what independent research her Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on education action zones and excellence in cities action zones. [2314]

Jacqui Smith: A number of DfES commissioned research papers and reports have been published about the progress and impact of education action zones—both statutory and in Excellence in Cities areas:

"Evidence of progress—an independent review of activities in Education Action Zones". Published in February 2002. The review was carried out by the Centre for Education Leadership and School Improvement (CELSI), Canterbury Christ Church University College, Kent. The report is available through the CELSI website.

"Education Action Zones: Commentary on the first six Zone Inspections". Ofsted report published 5 March 2001—available on the Ofsted website.

"Education Action Zones: Tackling difficult issues in round 2 zones". Ofsted report (HMI no. 1711) published 2 October 2003—available on the Ofsted website.

"Excellence in Cities and Education Action Zones: Management and Impact". Ofsted report (HMI 1399) published 2 June 2003—available on Ofsted website.

In addition the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) is presently in the final stages of preparing an evaluation of the Excellence in Cities programme which will be published later this year. The evaluation commenced in September 2000. An interim "Partnerships within Excellence in Cities Action Zones" paper was presented in October 2003 and is available on the NFER website: www.nfer.ac.uk/publications.

Autism

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding her Department has provided to improve education of people with autism in each of the last five years; what plans she has to increase this amount; and if she will make a statement. [677]

Maria Eagle: Funding to provide for the education of disabled children and adults is made available to statutory bodies within general budgets and is not broken down by individual type of disability. For example, over £3.5 billion was spent in 2003–04 from local authority and school budgets in meeting children's special educational needs (SEN), including those with autism, and the estimated outturn for 2004–05 is £3.8 billion.

It is for statutory bodies to use the funding available to them to improve educational provision for disabled children and adults. In 2002 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department of Health published Good Practice Guidance on Autistic Spectrum Disorders to help schools, local authorities and others improve their autism provision. Nine of the 11 DfES-funded SEN regional partnerships, including the south west, have autism working groups and are using the guidance and other resources to spread good practice in autism provision.

Bullying

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the incidence of bullying in schools that makes use of mobile phone technology, with particular reference to happy slapping; [2202]

(2) what guidance has been issued by her Department on the use of a no blame approach to bullying; [2207]

(3) what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the no blame approach on *(a)* bullying and *(b)* the experience of the victim; [2208]

(4) what assessment she has made of the escalation of bullying into other forms of antisocial behaviour; [2209]

(5) which anti-bullying groups her Department supports financially; and what the level of that support was in 2004; [2210]

(6) which voluntary and community sector organisations the Department included in discussions in formulation of its school anti-bullying policies; [2211]

(7) if she will list departmental programmes aimed at combating bullying; what the cost of each programme is expected to be over its lifetime; and if she will make a statement on the effectiveness of each; [2213]

(8) what the cost of hosting the regional and national conferences on bullying was; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of regional and national conferences hosted by her Department on combating bullying in terms of spreading best practice. [2214]

Jacqui Smith: Tackling bullying in all its forms is an issue which is taken seriously by the Department. No child should have to suffer the pain and indignity of bullying. Protecting children from fear and intimidation is a pre-requisite of raising school standards. Creating an environment where bullying is not tolerated is integral to good discipline; it is central to a strong school ethos and will help to ensure we can support every child to fulfil their potential.

There has been no national assessment made of incidences of bullying in schools involving the use of mobile phones and in particular happy slapping. However part of the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) remit under the funding provided by the Department is to develop innovative and practical approaches to tackling bullying, including the modern menace of bullying by text messaging. Bullying by text messages on mobile phones is also referred to in our guidance pack for schools 'Don't suffer in Silence'.

Departmental guidance on bullying does not refer to the use of an approach with the title "no blame". There has not been an assessment of its effectiveness. "Don't Suffer In Silence", the DfES guidance, describes a range of possible approaches for schools to use, including the support group approach. The key features of this approach are demonstrating to the learners who have been bullying a child the harmful impact of their words and actions, and involving the learners who have been bullying in putting matters right for the child who has suffered.

There has been no formal assessment of the escalation of bullying into other forms of antisocial behaviour.

In the 2004–05 financial year the Diana Award received £50,000, ChildLine in Partnership in Schools (CHIPS) £164,000, Parentline Plus 193,000 and the ABA £480,000.

There are many voluntary sector and community groups included in discussions including Act Against Bullying, Actionwork, Action for Inclusion, Beat Bullying, Bullying Online, Bullywatch, ChildLine, Children's Legal Centre, Children's Society in Rochdale, Commission for Racial Equality, ContinYou, Coram Family, Council for Disabled Children, Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH), Kidscape, National Children's Bureau, NCH, NSPCC, Parentline Plus, Safer Custody Group, Save the Children, School's Out!, SCOPE, Stonewall UK, Observatory for the Promotion of Non-violence, Young Minds, Young Transnet, Young Voice, YWCA England and Wales, Barnardos, The Circle Works, Diana Award, Bully Free Zone, Children are Unbeatable, PUPILINE, Shakti Imani Inclusion Project, The 1990 Trust, Muslim Liaison Committee, Muslim Council of Britain, Bradford Council of Mosques, Lancashire Council of Mosques, An-Nisa Society, Birmingham Central Mosque, Forum against Islamophobia and Racism, Imams and Mosques Council, Islamic Foundation (Leicester), Islamic Cultural Centre, Islamic Human Rights Commission, Islamic Society of Britain, The IQRA Trust, The Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony and the Churches' Commission on Racial Justice.

Work to support parents, schools and local authorities is carried out in our anti-bullying funded programmes referred to above. These programmes are delivered on our behalf by voluntary sector organisations.

In answer to the question on the regional and national conferences on bullying—the costs of those conferences from 2003–05 was approximately £1 million. The conferences were a significant success. Evaluations for the London conference were 100 per cent. positive, and for the series overall 97 per cent. positive. Evaluations judged that the conferences had been highly effective in spreading best practice.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the link between bullying and *(a)* truancy, *(b)* exclusions, *(c)* participation in (i) further and (ii) higher education and *(d)* the incidence of self-harm and suicide in each of the last five years. [2212]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect data on the prevalence of bullying and the impact that it has on truancy, exclusions, participation in further or higher education and the incidence of self-harm and suicide.

We know from research that bullying puts the emotional well-being and educational achievement of pupils at risk and has a significant and lasting negative impact upon children's lives. This is why the Department is committed to helping schools to prevent and combat bullying.

To help schools tackle bullying, the Department has issued guidance in the "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence" pack and in the "Stand up for us: challenging homophobia in schools" guidance. We have also commissioned various pieces of research to look at effective ways of tackling bullying from children and young people's points of view, launched an anti-bullying charter and in July 2004 funded a national alliance to tackle bullying to tackle bullying to carry forward the momentum of the work of the Make the Difference series of ministerial conferences.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which cross-departmental working groups attended by her Department deal with issues affecting bullying and antisocial behaviour; and which other departments are involved in each case. [2307]

Jacqui Smith: DfES both leads and attends a number of cross-government groups who are concerned with the prevention of all negative outcomes for children and young people, including those addressing issues of bullying and antisocial behaviour. In particular, these issues are among those discussed by the Department for Education and Skills' Change for Children Programme Board which includes the Home Office, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Department of Health, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Treasury and the Youth Justice Board.

Home Office, the Youth Justice Board and the Department for Education and Skills are also core members of other groups which have a more specific focus on offending including offending by young people, antisocial behaviour and bullying. These are the Youth Crime Programme Board, the Crime Reduction Delivery Board, the Penalty Notices for Disorder operational working group, the Prolific and Other Priority Offenders Programme Board and the Safer Schools Partnership steering group.

Other departments who are represented on some or all of these groups include: Department for Constitutional Affairs, Department for Work and Pensions, the Crown Prosecution Service and Government Offices for the Regions.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of links between low levels of literacy and *(a)* bullying, *(b)* poor behaviour and *(c)* truancy. [2315]

Jacqui Smith: From published research and our own statistics we are aware that there are links between bullying, poor behaviour and high levels of absence from school and low attainment, which is why this Government have made tackling bullying and low-level disruptive behaviour in schools, and tackling truancy from school, a priority.

Disabled Children

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has for the education of disabled children. [1473]

Maria Eagle: The Government's plans for education demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential, including disabled children. The reforms set out in the Department's Five-Year Strategy and Every Child Matters Change for Children Programme aim to help all children, including disabled children, to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being.

The range of measures we are taking through "Removing Barriers to Achievement", our special educational needs strategy, will help to build the capacity of all early education settings and schools to meet the needs of disabled children and children with SEN throughout their education. Specifically, we are working with the Disability Rights Commission and the Council for Disabled Children to provide schools with practical tools to improve their effectiveness in making reasonable adjustments to include disabled pupils and in reviewing and revising their plans for increasing access for disabled pupils to school premises and facilities, to the curriculum, and to information in alternative formats.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, public bodies, including schools, will also have a duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. This will help them to secure improved outcomes for disabled people—as employees, as service users and as pupils and students.

Gershon Review

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of staff who have left the Department as part of the implementation of the Gershon Review *(a)* has taken (i) voluntary and (ii) compulsory redundancy and *(b)* has been transferred to employment in a non-departmental public body. [1849]

Bill Rammell: As part of DfES's reform programme, which contributes to the savings identified in the 'Gershon Review', the Department plans to reduce in size by 1,460 posts by April 2008 without recourse to compulsory redundancies. The Department has so far reduced by 714 posts.

360 people have left the Department through a voluntary early release scheme and seven have transferred to employment in a non-departmental public body. Normal turnover accounts for the remainder of the reductions.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made in implementing the proposals of the Gershon Review as they affect her Department; and if she will make a statement. [1850]

Bill Rammell: My Department has made good progress to date and is on track to deliver annual efficiency gains of £4.3 billion by 2007–08. Details about how we propose to make our gains are set out in our efficiency technical note available on my Department's website. Much of this is in the schools sector, for example by measures designed to release teachers from tasks that take them away from teaching, through better procurement practices, and by better regulation.

Gifted Pupils

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent research she has collated into the performance of gifted pupils at state schools with particular reference to the performance of children in Key Stage 2 tests. [1739]

Jacqui Smith: We have received a preliminary analysis from the Specialist Schools Trust examining the GCSE performance of the 5 per cent. of pupils achieving the highest raw marks on Key Stage 2 tests in English and mathematics. The analysis suggests that pupils at those comprehensive schools where there are relatively large numbers from this population achieve a higher average number of GCSEs at grades A*/A than pupils at selective schools.

Level 2 Qualifications

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what resources she has allocated in the 2005–06 financial year to assist further education colleges to identify adults without a Level 2 qualification to receive free tuition; [1663]

(2) what resources she has provided in the 2005–06 financial year to ensure that more adults of working age achieve a first full Level 2 by 2010. [1664]

Bill Rammell: My Department's grant letter of 15 November 2004 to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) allocated a total of £6.7 billion for learning participation in 2005–06. The letter reiterated our key priorities for 2005–06 to meet the needs of young people, those lacking literacy, numeracy and English Language skills and those seeking a first full Level 2 qualification.

No new resources have been allocated specifically for Level 2 entitlement. The LSC allocates funds to providers based upon agreed development plans that deliver our priorities, and will consider Level 2 entitlement as part of this process.

Looked-after Children

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what strategies her Department has introduced for looked-after children who display *(a)* poor behaviour in school and *(b)* antisocial behaviour. [2318]

Jacqui Smith: Through the Children Act 2004, the Government are introducing a new duty on local authorities, with effect from 1 July 2005, to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children. We are currently consulting on statutory guidance, building on existing guidance published in 2000, which will set out what steps local authorities should take to fulfill this duty, including the importance of working effectively with schools.

This autumn we shall also be publishing a guidance document on looked-after children for school governors which will include advice on a range of specific issues, including behaviour.

The national standards which apply to children's homes and fostering services are designed to ensure that looked-after children develop socially acceptable behaviour and attend school regularly. In 2004 we introduced parenting contracts and parenting orders for behaviour, which can be applied to foster parents of looked-after children.

The Government have funded the National Association for the Care and Re-settlement of Offenders to develop a good practice handbook for children's services and youth offending teams on reducing offending by looked-after children, which is due to be published shortly.

More generally, we are implementing a wide-ranging programme to improve the behaviour of all school pupils. This includes behaviour management training materials for school staff, advice from expert behaviour consultants, curriculum materials to help schools develop pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills and extra resources for learning mentors, learning support units and multi-agency teams to support schools and pupils with the greatest need.

Pupil Behaviour

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effect of parenting orders on pupil behaviour. [2310]

Jacqui Smith: Research on the impact of parenting programmes undertaken in 2002 for the Youth Justice Board showed that they have a positive impact both on young people's perception of their parents and on their behaviour.

Statistically significant positive changes were reported in parenting skills and competencies by the time parents left their programmes.

> Court ordered parents benefited just as much as voluntary participants.
>
> In the year prior to the parenting programme, 89 per cent. of the young people had been convicted of an offence. In the year after, this had dropped to 61.5 per cent.—a reduction of nearly one third.
>
> On average, in the year before the programme, the young people committed 4.4 offences. This reduced to 2.1 in the following year, a 50 per cent. reduction. So, fewer young people offended, and those that did offend, offended less often.

These findings indicate that parenting orders can have a beneficial effect on the behaviour of the young person.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effect of acceptable behaviour contracts on pupil behaviour. [2311]

Jacqui Smith: None. Acceptable behaviour contracts are general measures used by the police to improve the behaviour of young people. They can be used in a school setting but they are not exclusive to schools. Schools have a range of measures to help them manage pupil behaviour including Pastoral Support Programmes which identify precise and realistic behavioural outcomes for the child to work towards and Parenting Contracts where the LEA or school governing body considers that parenting is a factor in the truancy or behaviour of the child and where the parent appears to be in need of (and willing to accept) support.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will encourage registration by children with behavioural difficulties at both a school and a pupil referral unit to enable such children get specialist support for behavioural difficulties. [2320]

Jacqui Smith: I believe that decisions on how to address the needs of pupils with behavioural difficulties are best made locally depending on the particular circumstances of individual pupils. Some pupils are educated both at their school and at a pupil referral unit.

Guidance issued in October 2004 about 'Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units' sets out various options and measures that are available to meet the needs of pupils who are at risk of exclusion including, where appropriate, placing them in pupil referral units as part of a planned programme.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to publish attendance figures at pupil referral units. [2321]

Jacqui Smith: We have already given an undertaking to ask local authorities to provide the Department with the relevant data. To this end, we are considering the best way to arrange for the collection and publication of the relevant information.

Run-away Children

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what emergency accommodation provision is in place for children who run away from home; what plans she has to increase these facilities; and if she will make a statement. [673]

Maria Eagle: Local authorities and their local partner agencies in children's services have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their areas. This includes providing accommodation for any child, where the person caring for them is prevented from providing him/her with suitable accommodation or care.

For the majority of young people who run away from home it will be in their interests to be provided with support that maintains them in their family network. Given the variety of ways in which children who run away come to official attention, for example outside normal working hours or in emergencies, some young people may require immediate access to overnight accommodation. Usually, the local authority's children's services will be best placed to provide this. However, the Social Exclusion Unit, in its report "Young Runaways" (2002) found that runaways may have difficulty accessing emergency overnight accommodation at the point of need.

For this reason, the Government have provided funding for a two year pilot scheme to develop, evaluate and test out the delivery and costs of flexible community based accommodation for young runaways. Six sites are now operating—in Co. Durham, Liverpool, Leicestershire/Leicester City and Rutland, Bradford, Torquay and London (at the long-established London Refuge). These pilot services have now reached the end of their first year. Government will give careful consideration to the lessons from this pilot programme to inform policy about future services for vulnerable young people who run away from home.

School Meals

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will make a statement on the new vocational qualification for school caterers; [2083]

(2) how many schools currently participate in the Healthy Schools Programme; [2085]

(3) what proportion of schools provide drinking water to pupils; [2086]

(4) what proportion of *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools meet current nutritional standards for school meals at lunch time; [2087]

(5) what proportion of schools provide vegetables and/or fruit on most days; and if she will make a statement; [2088]

(6) what progress she has made in preparing legislation extending new nutritional based standards to cover food across the school day. [2089]

Jacqui Smith: Together with the Food Standards Agency and People 1st, the Department has developed a Vocationally Related Qualification (VRQ) at Level 1 in Healthier Catering. It is currently with awarding bodies to arrange for accreditation by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The qualification should be in place and available for people to start on courses this autumn term. It is intended to give school cooks and caterers the knowledge and skills to deliver a healthier meals service. It has been specifically designed for staff involved in the preparation and service of school meals and it will enable school caterers to improve pupil nutritional intake from all food provided by the school meals service. It will ensure that everyone in the school kitchen aspires to the same high standards.

15,791 schools are currently participating in the Healthy Schools Programme. We currently targeting all schools with a 20 per cent. or more free school meals entitlement and aim to recruit the remainder of schools to the programme by 2009.

DfES does not collect data on the proportion of schools that provide drinking water to pupils. Regulations require all local authority maintained schools in England to have a wholesome supply of water for domestic purposes, including drinking water. However, it is for local education authorities, governors and schools to decide how and when drinking water should be made available to pupils.

Guidance produced by this Department advises caterers on meeting the requirements of the Government's nutritional standards for school lunches and recommends that drinking water should be made available to all pupils every day, free of charge. In addition, the Healthy Living Blueprint for Schools document suggests that all pupils should have access to drinking water at all times at a number of points around the school, preferably not from taps in toilets. The guidance also suggests that pupils should be permitted to carry water with them and consumption encouraged both in class and during break and lunchtime.

DfES does not routinely collect data on schools adherence to statutory school lunch nutritional standards. The responsibility for ensuring that the standards are met rests with local education authorities or, where the budget for school lunches is delegated to them, a school's governing body. Ultimately, the Secretary of State can direct a school to meet the standards where she considers they are failing to do so.

As part of the package aimed at improving school lunches, we are looking at a number of ways to strengthen the monitoring of school food:

From September 2005, every school inspection will include an assessment of the school's contribution to the Every Child Matters outcomes. Ofsted will review the quality of school approaches to food as part of their regular school inspections. In addition, Ofsted will be making visits to a number of pilot LEAs and schools in the autumn, working alongside nutritionists to determine the best way to inspect the proposed school meal standards. Once the new standards are in place, Ofsted will sample schools across LEAs to investigate how well they are being used;

Support for healthy eating will be one aspect of children's services Joint Area Reviews at Local Authority level;

Additional requirements for local authorities and school governing bodies to monitor the content of school lunches.

Current minimum school lunch standards require all schools to provide food from the fruit and vegetable group on a daily basis. More specifically, primary schools must ensure that both a fruit and a vegetable are provided on a daily basis; a fruit based desert is available at least twice per week; and fresh fruit, fruit tinned in juice or fruit salad is available every day. In secondary schools two foods from the fruit and vegetable group must be available each day, which must include both a fruit and a vegetable.

In addition, 16,069, or 97 per cent. of eligible schools (February 2005) benefit daily from the free fruit and vegetables provided by the Government's National School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme.

A School Meals Review Panel has been convened to recommend changes to current school lunch standards. The panel's work is expected to produce new draft school lunch standards for secondary schools in September 2005 and for primary schools soon after, both becoming mandatory in September 2006. Once the school lunch standards have been considered the panel will then set about looking at how the standards could apply to other food and drink on school premises, e.g. vending machines and tuck-shops. Any extended standards will need to be enshrined within regulations as are the current standards.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will list the members of the School Food Trust; [2084]

(2) if she will list the members of the School Meals Review Panel. [2090]

Jacqui Smith: The chair and members of the substantive School Food Trust have not yet been appointed. The posts are currently being advertised and will be filled according to Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA) guidelines. The appointments will be for a three-year term initially.

In the meantime an interim School Food Trust was announced on 16 May. It comprises Suzi Leather as interim chair, supported by chef and school food consultant Rob Rees and headteacher Chris Dean. The interim Trust is now working to develop the full Trust which will become operational later this year.

The School Food Trust will draw together representatives from the food industry, caterers, nutritionists, food interest groups, schools and parents. It will play a key role in taking forward the Government's programme for improving school food. It will give independent support and advice to schools and parents to improve the standard of school meals and ensure that the issue of school food remains high on the agenda.

The remit of the separate School Meals Review Panel is to advise the Government on how best to meet their commitment in the Public Health White Paper to improve school food, through the revision of current school meals standards. The panel's work is expected to produce new draft school lunch standards for secondary schools in September 2005 and for primary soon after, both becoming mandatory in September 2006.

The members of the School Meals Review Panel are as follows:

Suzi Leather—Chair
Joe Harvey—Health Education Trust
Gina Birley—Governor, St. Martin in the Fields school
Keith Sorrell—Headteacher, Windsor high school
Peter Shepherd—Headteacher, Canon Slade School (unable to participate—illness)
Joan McVittie—Headteacher, Leytonstone School
Christine Lewis—National Officer, UNISON
David Butler—National Confederation of PTAs
Sue Davies—Freelance Nutrition Expert
Ashley Riley—Child Poverty Action Group
John Caperon—Headteacher, Memorial Diocesan School, Tunbridge Wells
Beverley Baker—Local Authority Caterers' Association
Gaynor Bussell—Food and Drink Federation
David Lucas—School Catering Manager
Paul Kelly—Compass Group Plc
Eileen Steinbock—Brake Brothers
Peter Melchett—Soil Association
Jenny Poulter—Freelance Nutritionist
Helen Crawley—Caroline Walker Trust
Carol Weir—British Dietetic Association
Sara Stanner (replaced by Judy Buttriss)—British Nutrition Forum
Mike Nelson—Kings College, London
Mike Rayner—Dept of Public Health, University of Oxford
Lynn Stockley—Freelance Nutritionist

Observers

Rachel Clements—DH
Jenny Woolfe/Louis Levy—FSA
Stuart Miller—DfES
Penny Jones—DfES
Catherine Evans/Carol Macmillan—DfES
Jean Munroe—Scottish Executive, Education
Gillian Kynoch—Scottish Executive, Health

School Playing Fields

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many school playing fields there were in each London borough in each year since 1992; [2476]

(2) what percentage of schools in London have access to *(a)* a swimming pool and *(b)* playing fields. [2503]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not collected or held centrally.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school playing fields have been sold, and for what reasons, in each year since 2001. [1734]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires local authorities and schools to obtain the written consent of the Secretary of State before they can dispose of any part of a school's playing field. Schools are only allowed to dispose of genuinely surplus areas of playing field. All sale proceeds from approved applications are used to provide new or improved sports or education facilities at maintained schools.

The following table shows the number of applications to sell school playing fields larger than a small sports pitch for the under 10s, that is, larger than 2,000m^2, that have been approved in each year since 2001. Of a total of 79 approved applications, 31 were at closed or closing school sites. Of the 48 approved applications at operating schools, 33 involved proposals to improve on-site sports facilities, such as new all-weather pitches, sports halls or improved grass sports pitches. In the remaining 15 cases the proceeds were to be used to provide better education facilities at schools, such as new classrooms and performing arts facilities.

Calendar year	*Approved applications*
2001	22
2002	24
2003	17
2004	14
2005 (to date)	2

Notes:

1. The table includes applications to sell school playing fields from local authorities, foundation, voluntary and former grant-maintained schools.

2. All sale proceeds are used to provide new or improved sports or education facilities at maintained schools.

3. "Sports pitch" means an area of open grassed land which is equal to, or larger than, the Football Association's recommended 2,000m^2 area for games played by under 10s, and which has a configuration making it suitable for sports, whether laid out as a sports pitch or not.

Schools (Hammersmith and Fulham)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on secondary schools on special measures in the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. [2092]

Jacqui Smith: Hurlingham and Chelsea School and Burlington Danes School were both judged by Ofsted to need Special Measures in spring 2004. Both schools are currently implementing agreed action plans to bring about recovery. Ofsted is monitoring each school's progress.

Social Exclusion

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of links between social exclusion and the behavioural problems of children and young people. [2204]

Jacqui Smith: Research conducted by and for the Department shows there is a link between social exclusion and behaviour and that there is a complex interaction between risk and protective factors that can lead to the development of antisocial behaviour among children and young people and to later social exclusion.

In addition, research suggests that this could be a two-way relationship, with behavioural problems both leading to, and resulting from, social exclusion.

The Department has commissioned a number of pieces of research to explore these issues in more detail as well as looking at what interventions are effective in reducing the risk of these negative outcomes. Some key examples of this are: "Support from the Start: working with young children and their families to reduce the risks of crime and antisocial behaviour", "Preventing Children's Involvement in Crime and Anti-social Behaviour: a literature review"; and "Offenders of the Future? Assessing the Risk of Children and Young People Becoming Involved in Criminal or Antisocial Behaviour".

In addition, the Youth Cohort Study shows that pupils' poor behaviour and poor attendance at school are associated with a greater likelihood of not being involved in education, employment or training at ages 16 to 18 and lower attainment at GCSE. The Social Exclusion Unit's "Bridging the Gap" report showed that these factors increase the risk of social exclusion. The report also concluded that related risk factors for non-participation in education, employment or training include mental health problems, educational disaffection, use of drugs or alcohol and involvement in criminal/antisocial behaviour.

These issues are acknowledged in the Green Paper "Every Child Matters" and in the development of the Change for Children Programme, signalling the Department's commitment to improving children and young people's outcomes. The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve through learning, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being. As part of this the Department is committed to improving behaviour in schools, and has implemented a range of policies (such as the Behaviour Improvement Programme) aimed at tackling the issues of poor behaviour and poor attendance in order to reduce the risk of negative outcomes in later life for young people.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of links between social exclusion and the behavioural problems of children in early years education. [2205]

Jacqui Smith: Research evidence, such as my Department's Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) study, shows a link between social deprivation and the risk of poor social and behavioural development in the early years. It is also known from research that good quality pre-school education and child care can have clear positive effects on children's social and emotional development in the early years and into primary school.

In recognition of the importance of young children starting to develop good social skills in their earliest years of life the Department has a PSA target to *(a)* improve children's communication, social and emotional development so that, by 2008, 50 per cent.[1] of children reach a good level of development at the end of the Foundation Stage; and *(b)* to reduce inequalities between the level of development achieved by children in the 20 per cent. most disadvantaged areas and the rest of England.

The Department has also appointed the Institute of Psychology, King's College London to develop a training programme on young children's personal social and emotional development to support the "Birth to Three Matters" and "Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage" documents.

[1] The proposed target level is provisional. Level to be confirmed when 2005 Foundation Stage Profile results are available.

Teacher Assaults (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers in Coventry have been assaulted by pupils in each year since 1997. [1271]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not collected centrally.

Tomlinson Inquiry

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of the Tomlinson Inquiry into 14 to 19 Education was. [2323]

Jacqui Smith: The cost of the working group on 14 to 19 reform, chaired by Sir Mike Tomlinson, was some £1.3 million over the 18 months lifetime of the group. In addition, the running costs of the departmental staff supporting the working group amounted to some £400,000.

The working group did a great deal of valuable work which helped to inform the White Paper, 14 to 19 Education and Skills, published in February and to build consensus on the need for reform.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

106 Agreements

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will *(a)* relax the criteria for 106 agreements to enable local authorities greater discretion and *(b)* require developers of smaller developments in an area to contribute to a common 106 type fund. [1696]

Yvette Cooper: It is for local planning authorities to decide whether or not to negotiate a section 106 agreement as part of a proposed development.

Current policy guidance on the appropriate use of these agreements (also known as planning obligations) is set out in DOE circular 1/97. This gives the general advice that they should be sought only where they are necessary, relevant to planning, directly related to the proposed development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, and reasonable in all other respects.

Revised draft guidance was issued for consultation in November 2004 and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will publish the final version later this summer. The new circular will give further advice on the pooling of contributions secured through section 106 agreements.

Broomfield Tip, Standish

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what grants have been given to Wigan Metropolitan borough council for *(a)* extinguishing the fire at Broomfield Tip, Standish and *(b)* the restoration of the site afterwards. [1465]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) has to-date given grant assistance totalling £479,000 to Wigan Metropolitan borough council towards the costs incurred by the council in dealing with the extinguishment of the underground fire and mineshaft capping at Broomfield Tip, Standish, and the restoration of the site afterwards.

Community Programmes

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has for the *(a)* Single Community Programme, *(b)* Community Chest, *(c)* Community Learning Chest and *(d)* Community Empowerment Fund; and if he will make a statement. [1249]

Mr. Woolas: The single Community Programme was created in 2004 through the merger of Community Chests, Community Learning Chests and the Community Empowerment Fund. The single Community Programme will operate until the end of the 2005–06 financial year. From 2006–07 these resources will be administered as part of the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund.

Electoral Fraud

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps the Government are taking to combat fraud in the use of postal votes. [297]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

The Government published a policy paper for discussion on 25 May 2005. This covered a range of proposals for enhancing the security of postal voting. I sent the policy paper to all Members and copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. I also refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement made on 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 21WS.

Green Belt

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many hectares of green belt land there were in *(a)* Hertfordshire, *(b)* Bedfordshire, *(c)* Essex, *(d)* Cambridgeshire, *(e)* Norfolk and *(f)* Suffolk in (i) 1997 and (ii) 2004. [2306]

Yvette Cooper: The Government expect to publish figures updated to 2004 on the extent of, and changes to, the green belt this autumn. The most recent figures available are set out as follows:

Counties[1] *(including unitary councils)*	*Area* *1997*	*2003*	*Hectares Change*
Hertfordshire	83,660	83,610	-50
Bedfordshire and Luton UA	28,380	28,380	0
Essex, including Southend on Sea UA and Thurrock UA	97,650	97,810	160
Cambridgeshire	26,690	26,690	0
Norfolk	0	0	0
Suffolk	0	0	0

[1] The responsible local planning authority is the 'district' level council. County names refer to geographic counties and not to those administrative bodies.

Data reproduced after grouping into 'counties'.

Source:

"Local planning authority, Green Belt statistics: England 2003", published by ODPM on 16 September 2004 at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_031125.hcsp

Highfields Estate (Stafford)

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much capital funding was provided to Stafford borough council in the form of *(a)* capital grant and *(b)* borrowing permissions out of the estates action programme for regeneration works on the Highfields estate in Stafford; and what conditions were attached, with particular reference to the neighbourhood office on the estate. [1978]

Mr. Woolas: The Department of the Environment (DoE), as it was then, allocated a total of £879,000 Estate Action funding for improvements to the Highfields estate in Stafford during the period 1992–95. The allocation was in the form of supplementary credit approvals (borrowing permission) and included £98,000 for provision of a neighbourhood office. There was no grant funding for this programme. The overall conditions relating to the Estate Action funding were:

> The submission of certified returns providing information on progress of the scheme, and actual and projected expenditure, using forms supplied by the DoE; and
>
> The DoE being satisfied that the scheme progressed satisfactorily in accordance with the proposals approved by the Department and as set out in an agreed memorandum provided by them.

There were no specific conditions attached to the neighbourhood office.

Homeless Families

Ms Keeble: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many families with children are being accommodated in bed-and-breakfast hostels. [2167]

Yvette Cooper: On 31 December 2004, the latest date for which information is available, an estimated 820 households containing dependent children or a pregnant woman were living in bed and breakfast style accommodation in England. This represents 1 per cent. of all households in temporary accommodation, and a decrease of 6,140 households since March 2002. Of these 820 households, 100 had been resident in bed and breakfast for more than six weeks; of these, 36 were housed under local authorities' discretionary powers—for example during a review or appeal—so were not being housed in breach of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003 which came into force on 1 April 2004, to reinforce and sustain the bed-and-breakfast target that no family with children should have to live in a bed-and-breakfast hotel for longer than six weeks by March 2004.

These figures are included in the latest statistical release on statutory homelessness, published 14 March

2005, available in both the Library of the House and via the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. The next release, for the first quarter of 2005 and presenting the position on usage of temporary accommodation as at 31 March, will be published on 13 June.

Housing

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable housing units built or procured through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme and Challenge Fund were classified as *(a)* mixed funded social rented housing, *(b)* temporary social rented housing, *(c)* Homebuy general market purchase, *(d)* Homebuy general new build, *(e)* mixed funded low cost home ownership for sale, *(f)* miscellaneous works to RSL stock, *(g)* reimprovements to rented RSL stock, *(h)* works only rehabilitation for rented RSL stock, *(i)* works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale, *(j)* intermediate rent for key workers, *(k)* Homebuy market purchase for key workers, *(l)* Homebuy new build for key workers and *(m)* mixed funded sale for key workers in the Yorkshire and the Humber Region in each year since 1997–98; and how much was spent on each category in each year. [1316]

Yvette Cooper: The following tables show completions and expenditure through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme, for categories *(a)* to *(i)* . The information in the tables do not include all the programmes that the ADP is used for and therefore does not represent the total funding for the Yorkshire and Humberside region. Other categories with funding during the time period covered by the table are Right to Acquire, Voluntary Purchase Grant, Do-It-Yourself Shared Ownership, and Temporary Intermediate and Market Rent Housing. The Key Worker Living programme was limited to London and the wider south east, so there are no completions or investment in categories *(j)* to *(m)* in the Yorkshire and Humber Region through this programme.

The Challenge Fund was limited to London, south east and eastern regions, therefore there is no Challenge Fund expenditure in Yorkshire and Humberside.

Funding and completions are not directly comparable, as funding will relate to projects running, not necessarily units completed, in any one year.

ADP completions in units for Yorkshire and Humberside from 1997–98–2004–05

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*Units* *2000–01*
(a) Mixed funded Social Rent	2202	1567	1654	1448
(b) Temporary Social Housing	284	82	153	96
(c) Homebuy market purchase	0	0	42	25
(d) Homebuy New Build	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(e) Mixed-funded Low Cost Home Ownership	482	467	216	133
(f) Miscellaneous Works	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(g) Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(h) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(i) Works-only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
(a) Mixed funded Social Rent	1511	1214	1196	852
(b) Temporary Social Housing	162	15	102	23
(c) Homebuy market purchase	19	8	14	25
(d) Homebuy New Build	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
(e) Mixed-funded Low Cost Home Ownership	119	92	87	42
(f) Miscellaneous Works	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
*(g)*Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(h) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(i) Works-only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes:

Categories *(f)* to *(i)* do not have complete records of units.

ADP expenditure for Yorkshire and Humberside from 1997–98–2004–05

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*£ million* *2000–01*
(a) Mixed funded Social Rent	33.25	31.53	37.24	38.42
(b) Temporary Social Housing	1.61	0.00	0.92	1.97
(c) Homebuy market purchase	0.00	0.00	0.34	0.42
(d) Homebuy New Build	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(e) Mixed-funded Low Cost Home Ownership	5.32	5.43	2.51	1.62
(f) Miscellaneous Works	1.73	2.25	0.74	0.99
(g) Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	0.00	0.00	0.30	0.39
(h) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.13
(i) Works-only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
(a) Mixed funded Social Rent	40.97	45.56	56.33	50.65
(b) Temporary Social Housing	1.56	0.59	1.80	0.32
(c) Homebuy market purchase	0.36	0.17	0.39	0.73
(d) Homebuy New Build	n/a	n/a	n/a	–0.00
(e) Mixed-funded Low Cost Home Ownership	1.45	0.65	1.50	3.12
(f) Miscellaneous Works	1.55	1.69	1.35	1.13
(g) Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	0.17	0.10	2.36	3.56
(h) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	1.03	0.20	0.39	0.22
(i) Works-only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes:

Categories *(g)*, *(h)*, and *(i)* are included in Miscellaneous Works *(f)* for years 1997–98 and 1998–99.

John Cummings: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable homes have been *(a)* started and *(b)* completed in the last three years in the district of Easington council area. [1592]

Yvette Cooper: The information is as follows:

(a) A total of 40 affordable homes were started in Easington area in 2004–05; records prior to this year are incomplete.

(b) The table shows completions through housing corporations approved development programme for 2002–03 to 2004–05 in Easington council area. There were no transitional local social housing grant (TLASHG) completions.

	Units completed
2002–03	12
2003–04	63
2004–05	34

Source:

Housing Corporation (The table includes new build dwellings, acquisitions and refurbishments).

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much investment there has been in *(a)* new council-owned dwellings and *(b)* housing association dwellings in each London borough in each year since 1997; and how much such investment is planned for 2005–06. [2248]

Yvette Cooper: From 1998–99 to 2004–05 four London boroughs built affordable dwellings for rent. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides general support towards local authorities' housing capital investment programmes. We are unable to indicate how much each authority chose (or will choose) to spend on these new dwellings and how much on existing stock.

London

	Hillingdon	Islington	Waltham Forest	Wandsworth	£000 Total London
1997–98	7,854	15,084	8,749	13,874	45,561
1998–99	7,464	18,862	11,557	18,006	55,889
1999–2000	7,798	18,150	12,933	16,330	55,211
2000–01	11,481	28,557	22,418	20,832	83,288
2001–02	14,127	38,297	24,982	29,002	106,408
2002–03	13,923	40,237	22,727	26,937	103,824
2003–04	16,022	39,444	18,061	23,973	97,500
2004–05	26,028	41,068	15,565	22,399	105,060
2005–06	27,718	67,243	39,081	22,620	156,662

Government capital investment in housing association dwellings in the same period was as follows:

LA name	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	£000 2000–01
City of London	3,067	4,093	2,954	5,242
Barking and Dagenham	13,270	6,281	16,853	15,551
Barnet	8,490	12,141	8,328	11,719
Bexley	3,288	6,873	3,839	6,885
Brent	13,010	14,763	20,879	17,914
Bromley	12,354	12,762	9,637	16,892
Camden	20,578	15,786	15,166	14,364
Croydon	17,956	15,325	15,504	20,084
Ealing	13,607	12,020	8,918	11,669
Enfield	5,310	6,205	9,048	20,525
Greenwich	7,155	7,500	8,392	17,117
Hackney	19,710	13,518	15,990	18,325
Hammersmith and Fulham	15,587	11,615	6,876	11,726

LA name	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*£000 2000–01*
Haringey	16,459	13,930	12,259	20,804
Harrow	4,627	6,354	4,339	6,005
Havering	2,746	2,245	2,421	3,074
Hillingdon	8,082	8,879	12,626	15,123
Hounslow	7,860	5,366	11,746	8,184
Islington	18,322	14,517	6,023	10,863
Kensington and Chelsea	33,364	13,095	23,917	18,474
Kingston upon Thames	4,812	1,947	3,570	5,142
Lambeth	16,645	10,642	16,601	16,183
Lewisham	8,714	12,054	10,589	13,361
Merton	5,243	5,405	5,325	7,782
Newham	10,892	13,949	11,488	19,182
Redbridge	6,484	6,883	7,872	5,583
Richmond upon Thames	3,364	4,297	2,374	3,613
Southwark	8,416	9,458	14,744	18,158
Sutton	2,775	2,432	4,778	8,153
Tower Hamlets	18,495	6,617	14,632	17,008
Waltham Forest	9,299	10,547	9,666	20,225
Wandsworth	16,260	10,496	10,651	7,243
Westminster	12,866	28,487	17,229	19,884
London total	369,107	326,482	345,234	432,057

LA name	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Forecast 2005–06*
City of London	6,621	8,562	17,937	2,230	3,637
Barking and Dagenham	25,201	28,098	9,782	15,978	15,503
Barnet	8,267	13,439	13,285	14,828	13,633
Bexley	3,956	6,638	7,233	9,030	5,792
Brent	17,540	31,030	25,216	33,439	35,941
Bromley	16,593	18,014	16,920	11,956	9,053
Camden	17,247	20,723	29,905	29,219	11,463
Croydon	24,560	24,186	25,810	28,378	42,894
Ealing	15,710	20,511	33,550	29,629	19,360
Enfield	16,986	15,278	25,827	31,447	5,068
Greenwich	13,276	21,775	49,276	23,931	38,548
Hackney	13,718	21,349	41,983	43,925	28,566
Hammersmith and Fulham	25,129	28,567	23,620	39,183	41,372
Haringey	25,088	20,774	26,364	29,872	26,771
Harrow	14,716	8,593	11,008	14,072	1,632
Havering	3,269	3,624	3,904	5,120	6,938
Hillingdon	9,436	11,264	14,443	13,211	8,194
Hounslow	3,781	10,808	31,544	20,473	14,132
Islington	13,073	26,447	46,716	31,242	51,701
Kensington and Chelsea	13,983	21,885	22,930	11,812	7,574
Kingston upon Thames	3,769	4,893	6,051	7,387	8,210
Lambeth	13,567	14,683	37,751	23,773	43,883
Lewisham	22,074	29,548	20,892	31,005	15,070
Merton	7,667	3,158	12,147	9,798	5,726
Newham	24,222	17,736	35,302	40,184	55,094
Redbridge	7,203	13,702	15,227	9,707	4,656
Richmond upon Thames	7,866	5,157	10,884	4,231	4,966
Southwark	16,372	21,709	36,489	61,840	27,281
Sutton	6,936	4,653	13,704	11,032	4,125
Tower Hamlets	12,723	17,744	33,372	32,874	18,892
Waltham Forest	19,519	16,266	6,991	13,623	6,014
Wandsworth	10,024	9,859	20,508	11,390	12,848
Westminster	13,896	23,052	23,043	32,628	18,318
London total	453,988	543,725	749,614	728,447	612,855

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research his Department has *(a)* carried out and *(b)* commissioned to examine the environmental (i) impact and (ii) sustainability of the housebuilding programme in Kent Thameside and the Thames Gateway growth area. [1275]

Yvette Cooper: All new housing in Kent Thameside and the wider Thames Gateway growth area will be delivered through the planning system, and will therefore be subject to both strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in line with the European SEA directive and environmental impact assessment. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all local development documents and regional spatial strategies must be subject to a thorough sustainability appraisal incorporating the full requirements of the SEA Directive.

In addition, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has awarded a major research contract as part of our response to the Barker Review to consider the economic, social, environmental and fiscal implications of additional house building. The contract runs to June 2005, and has been awarded to a consortium led by Entec UK.

Mr. Denham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* minimum, *(b)* average and *(c)* maximum public capital cost per (i) shared ownership property and (ii) social rented home was in each region in England in the most recent year for which figures are available. [1684]

Yvette Cooper: The table shows the lowest, average and highest level of public capital investment per unit for the schemes included in the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme (ADP) 2004–06 for each region in England broken down by shared ownership and social rent.

£

	Shared ownership			*Rent*		
Region	*Lowest*	*Average*	*Highest*	*Lowest*	*Average*	*Highest*
London	10,000	39,548	93,404	10,484	99,902	262,500
South East	2,500	23,034	80,600	3,333	58,715	185,425
South West	2,000	18,559	71,250	1,500	49,495	319,850
East Midlands	1,667	20,634	62,083	3,214	43,196	133,333
Eastern	1,667	18,718	64,000	2,000	47,313	168,680
West Midlands	5,000	23,684	68,780	8,413	52,473	136,508
Yorkshire and Humberside	16,938	18,460	37,985	15,717	47,945	102,605
North East	17,807	30,848	60,797	18,871	54,771	161,853
North West	2,125	31,340	71,160	10,000	67,226	297,066

Note:

Figures based on ADP allocation and other public sector investment by scheme as at 31 May 2005.

Source:

Housing Corporation

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice he has provided to London boroughs on housing allocations policies in respect of single people. [2146]

Yvette Cooper: The Government issued statutory guidance to all local housing authorities, including London boroughs, in November 2002 about the allocation of social housing under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (the 1996 Act), as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

The changes to Part 6 of the 1996 Act introduced by the Homelessness Act 2002 were designed to ensure the widest possible access to social housing for all applicants, while at the same time ensuring that priority for social housing goes to those in greater housing need, including single people where relevant.

The revised Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation came into force on 31 January 2003.

However, the Government have not issued advice on housing allocation policies specifically aimed at London boroughs, or specifically in respect of single people.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people were on the housing need list in each London borough on the last date for which figures are available; how many new lettings there were in each such borough in 2004–05; and how many new dwellings are expected to become available for new tenancies in 2005–06. [2247]

Yvette Cooper: Information on the number of new local authority (LA) lettings made during 2004–05 is not yet available. Therefore, the latest information, for 2003–04, on:

the number of households on the housing waiting lists at 1 April;

the number of social (LA and registered social landlords (RSLs)) lettings made to new tenants, and;

the number of new RSL dwellings planned for rent covering two years, 2004–05 and 2005–06.

in each London borough is given in the table.

Local authorities sometimes maintain a common waiting list with the RSLs, sometimes known as housing associations, in their district. However, information is not held centrally where a RSL maintains a separate waiting list to the local authority.

The number of new RSL dwellings planned for rent has been provided covering two years as the Housing Corporation now plan the building of new RSL dwellings using a two-year allocation process.

Table: Housing waiting list numbers, new social lettings made and new RSL dwellings planned for rent in 2004–05 and 2005–06, by London borough[1]

London borough	*Households on the housing waiting list at 1 April 2004*	*Number of social lettings*[2] *to new tenants during 2003–04*	*Number of new RSL dwellings planned for rent in 2004–05 and 2005–06*[3]
Barking and Dagenham	3,149	1,126	315
Barnet[4]	10,732	827	346
Bexley[4]	4,404	1,137	105
Brent	15,504	1,296	692
Bromley	3,866	966	197
Camden	15,757	2,648	230
City of London	914	140	0
Croydon[4]	8,067	2,163	385
Ealing	12,808	1,394	357
Enfield	12,584	1,117	312
Greenwich	6,710	2,927	468
Hackney	11,016	3,856	458
Hammersmith and Fulham[4]	7,874	1,561	325
Haringey	16,920	1,492	488
Harrow	4,333	795	96
Havering	2,384	673	176
Hillingdon[4]	6,910	993	130
Hounslow	7,088	974	327
Islington	6,871	2,118	369
Kensington and Chelsea[4]	8,326	1,353	170
Kingston upon Thames[4]	4,465	439	269
Lambeth	12,847	2,990	635
Lewisham[4]	17,497	2,027	301
Merton	4,834	821	121
Newham	19,503	1,573	525
Redbridge	4,766	694	156
Richmond upon Thames[4]	4,868	564	53
Southwark	6,657	2,904	425
Sutton	2,145	821	164
Tower Hamlets[4]	14,575	4,008	919
Waltham Forest	9,016	1,559	107
Wandsworth	6,672	1,714	41
Westminster	5,667	2,672	215
London total	279,729	51,342	9,877

[1] Social housing is the combination of local authority (LA) and registered social landlord (RSL) tenures.

[2] New LA and RSL lettings have been combined and shown here.

[3] Number of RSL dwellings for which an allocation of funding was made available as part of the Approved Development Programme 2004–06 in March 2004. These figures are for rented schemes being provided either through new build or acquisition and refurbishment.

[4] Denotes that the London borough has a common waiting list with the RSLs in their area.

Source:

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return, Housing Corporation's CORE return and the Housing Corporation London Allocation Statement 2004–06

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will list sites released for new housing under the proposals which he announced on 25 May; [1611]

(2) which of the sites released for new housing under the proposals announced on 25 May are in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* the constituency of Chipping Barnet; and which of the latter are on green belt land. [1612]

Yvette Cooper: The announcement by my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 25 May referred to 700 sites currently entered on the Register of surplus public sector land which is maintained by English Partnerships. The sites' owners and English Partnerships are currently reviewing all registered sites to assess their development potential. A list of the sites, as at March 2005, can be found on the English Partnerships website at: http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/images/16EE954C904340DDAB44702EF5D2 ADE6.pdf

51 sites on the Register as at March 2005 are situated in the Greater London area. None of these sites is located in Chipping Barnet. An updated list of Register sites will be published by English Partnerships towards the end of June 2005.

In addition, it was announced on 1 April that a portfolio of nearly 100 ex-NHS sites, would be transferred from the Department of Health to English Partnerships. The first tranche of 67 sites transferred on 6 April. Work is on-going with partners and local authorities to assess each site to identify how they can contribute to local housing and employment needs. It is estimated that the total portfolio of 96 sites could accommodate up to 15,000 new homes nationally, with at least 5,000 being affordable. This estimate is subject to planning permission for the individual sites, and residential development will not be appropriate on all of the sites.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to publish his review of the future of arm's length management organisations; and if he will list those who participated in the review. [1751]

Yvette Cooper: The current Review of the long term future of arm's length management organisations (ALMOs) will produce a formal consultation paper later in the summer. The following are represented on the Review Group: ALMOs; local authorities with ALMOs; the National Federation of ALMOs, the Local Government Association, the Association of London Government; Tenants Participation Advisory Services; the Housing Inspectorate; the Chartered Institute of Housing; the Housing Corporation; HM Treasury; and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in each of the last two quarters how many families applying to local authorities for housing were found to be intentionally homeless. [2166]

Yvette Cooper: Information collected quarterly about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is in respect of applicant households, which encompasses single people as well as family groups. The number of households in England found after investigation to be eligible for assistance and in priority need, but intentionally homeless, was as follows:

2004	*Number of households*
Quarter 3 (July-September)	3,550
Quarter 4 (October-December)	3,400

In both quarters, cases found to be intentionally homeless accounted for 5 per cent. of all decisions.

A full summary of local authority decisions up to and including the fourth quarter of 2004 is included in the latest statistical release on statutory homelessness, published 14 March 2005, available in both the Library of the House and via the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. The next release, for the first quarter of 2005, will be published on 13 June.

Local Authorities (General Elections)

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what guidance is provided to local authorities on factors to be taken into account in the run-up to a parliamentary general election; and to what extent that guidance is required to be observed *(a)* before an election is announced, *(b)* in the period between announcement of an election and the dissolution of Parliament and *(c)* following dissolution; [1025]

(2) whether the amendments made following the 2001 general election to the guidance issued to local authorities on factors to be taken into account in the run-up to a general election are fully in force. [1026]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

The Government do not issue guidance to local authorities on factors to be taken into account before, during or after a UK parliamentary election. Guidance on the administration of elections is issued to returning officers by the Electoral Commission—"Managing a UK parliamentary general election-good practice guidance manual" is available on the Commission's website at: http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk/files/dms/GeguidancePartGFINAL_15842-11649_E_S_W_.pdf. Guidance on recounts can be found in Part G of this document. Other specific guidance—for instance on security issues and Returning Officers' expenses—is issued by my Department and is available on the departmental website.

Returning officers operate independently from both local authorities and central government. Any guidance is offered for their assistance but they are not bound either to accept or to follow it.

Local Government

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department's good practice guidelines for local authorities on sales of assets permit a vendor to proceed with the private sale of a public asset without making public information on negotiations with its preferred bidder. [1344]

Mr. Woolas: Local authorities are responsible for taking their own decisions on sale and procurement matters within the framework of law which includes the European Union Treaty, the EU Procurement Directives, the regulations that implement them in the UK and other domestic legislation. In doing so, they will have regard to relevant good practice guidance. Any issues arising from a specific case would need to be pursued with the individual authority in the first instance.

Local Land Charges

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will introduce a two tier system for local land charges for *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* private companies; [1779]

(2) what assessment he has made of the ability of councils to fund the maintenance and provision of access to information with particular reference to local land charges; and whether he has considered allowing councils to increase their charges for the provision of such information; [1787]

(3) what assessment he has made of the merits of councils increasing their charges for access to information; and if he will support an increase from the existing £11 fee to one of £60; [1788]

(4) if he will take steps to include the consideration of changes to local land charges in the Office of Fair Trading's ongoing market study. [1789]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

In England and Wales local land charges are matters of a public nature affecting land. They are recorded in registers maintained by local registering authorities. The fees payable for local land charge services are set by the Lord Chancellor, with the concurrence of HM Treasury, under the Local Land Charges Act 1975 as amended. The fees do not vary according to the identity of the person to whom the service is provided. There are no plans to change this policy.

The fees are set at levels that take into account the cost of delivering the relevant services. For example, the fee for an official search of the local land charges register is £6 or, if conducted electronically, £4, and the fee for a personal search is £11. However, as the present nationally set fees can only approximately reflect the costs of each individual registering authority, the Government has amended the 1975 Act (see schedule 4 paragraphs 82–85 of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005) to devolve the power to set local land charge fees, other than personal search fees, to registering authorities in England. They will be permitted to set fees, which taking one year with another, recover an amount up to, but not exceeding, the costs they incur in providing local land charge services. In setting fees, registering authorities will have to have regard to guidance issued by the Lord Chancellor. These arrangements are to be brought into force on a date to be fixed. The Lord Chancellor's fee-setting power for all local land charges in Wales was devolved to the Welsh Assembly on 31 December 2004.

There are currently no plans to change the fee payable for personal searches. Any change would have to be supported by sound evidence and public consultation would be required before making any substantial increase.

The Office of Fair Trading's market study on the provision of property information includes consideration of the charges for local land charge services (including personal searches of the local land charges register). Any recommendations made by OFT will be taken into account in the setting of fees for personal searches of the local land charges register and in the preparation of any guidance to be issued in relation to other local land charge fees.

In relation to the provision of property information, other than local land charges, local authorities can already set fees under the Local Authorities (Charges for Land Searches) Regulations 1994. In setting such fees a local authority is required to have regard to its costs in providing the information. Local authorities may also impose a charge for the provision of information in response to an enquiry under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. No changes are currently proposed to these arrangements.

Planning Approvals

Harry Cohen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will bring forward proposals for penalties against those who rely on retrospective planning approvals. [2133]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is carrying out a review of the planning enforcement system in England. Retrospective planning applications, including whether any penalties should be imposed, and retrospective planning permission are part of that review.

Referendums

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what campaign spending restrictions apply for campaigning in *(a)* mayoral referendums and *(b)* local referendums held under the Local Government Act 2003. [1100]

Mr. Woolas: The Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (England) Regulations 2001 specify an expenses limit for mayoral referendums of £2,000, plus 5p per elector on the relevant register of local government electors. That limit applies to any expenses incurred by or on behalf of an individual or body during the referendum period for the purpose of promoting or securing a particular result in the referendum. In addition, local authorities must have regard to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, which states that an authority must not incur spending designed to influence the outcome of a mayoral election.

The Local Government Act 2003 provides for local authorities to hold advisory referendums on local issues. There is no provision setting a limit on campaign spending for this purpose. However, the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity states that a local authority should not use public funds for the purpose of persuading the public to hold a particular view in a referendum.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidelines the Government have published on *(a)* initiating and *(b)* conducting local referendums under the Local Government Act 2003. [1108]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

The Government have published no guidelines on initiating or conducting local referendums under the Local Government Act 2003.

Registered Social Landlords

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the performance requirements for registered social landlords to receive gap funding have been changed in the last 12 months; and whether the requirement that they achieve two stars remains. [1749]

Yvette Cooper: The gap funding arrangements for housing transfer were announced on 21 March. There have been no subsequent changes to the performance requirements for registered social landlords (RSL). The suggestion that the RSL achieve two star performance was in a working draft on which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister consulted. It was not included arrangements as during consultation it became clear that it would be unreasonable to link payment of gap funding, on which the viability of the RSL business plan is dependent, to a decision from a third party, the Housing Inspectorate, who gives the performance ratings.

Urban Growth Areas

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which areas in England are designated as Urban Growth Areas. [1104]

Yvette Cooper: The Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9, March 2001) identified Ashford, Milton Keynes/South Midlands (MKSM) and London-Stansted-Cambridge (LSC), alongside the Thames Gateway, as growth areas to be taken forward through assessment of potential, and then examination and testing in the regional planning process. In February 2004 the London-Stansted-Cambridge area was expanded to include all of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (now known as LSCP).

In addition, in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's 5 Year Plan "Homes for All" (January 2005) my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced that additional support would be offered to assist other areas in the wider south-east and adjoining regions where local partners wish to bring forward major proposals for sustainable growth. No decision has been made yet on locations for additional support.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Homelessness

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were designated as homeless in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the provision for homeless people in Northern Ireland. [2263]

Mr. Hanson: During the last five financial years (1 April to 31 March each year) the information requested is as follows:

	Number
2000–01	6,457
2001–02	7,374
2002–03	8,580
2003–04	8,594
2004–05	8,470

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has had its homelessness strategy in place since late in 2002. The impact of the strategy is starting to be reflected in the homelessness figures, which showed a small but welcome reduction in 2004–05 compared to the previous two years. An analysis of the figures shows a reduction in the number of cases of homelessness caused by intimidation. During the past year the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has met its target of eliminating the use of bed and breakfast type of accommodation for families, except in emergency cases. It has also provided approximately £1.5 million of funding to a range of voluntary bodies for special projects to tackle and prevent homelessness. These projects included rent guarantee schemes, mediation services, youth homelessness prevention schemes, street outreach services for rough sleepers and specialist advice workers.

Legislative Programme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will provide details of the application to Northern Ireland of the legislative programme outlined in the Gracious Speech; and what discussions have taken place between him and his Cabinet colleagues in relation to its application to Northern Ireland. [2267]

Mr. Hain: Details of the legislative programme for this Session, including the territorial application of each Bill, are laid out on the website www.commonsleader.gov.uk. The territorial extent of Bills is, of course, the subject of discussion with Cabinet colleagues. These discussions are covered by collective responsibility and so I am unable to give any further details.

Prison Service

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of whether there is a neutral working environment in the Northern Ireland Prison Service. [2004]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 184W.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures have been taken to ensure a neutral working environment in the Northern Ireland Prison Service. [2005]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 184W.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Airwave

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what statistical basis his statement on 23 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 432, on the delivery of the Airwave scheme, was founded. [2175]

Hazel Blears: The Airwave contract called for roll out to all forces in England, Wales and Scotland to be completed by 2005. That target has been met. The contract was for a fixed price, with any additional costs arising during roll-out of the system being met by O2 Airwave.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether an evaluation of the performance of the Airwave radio communications network has been carried out. [2178]

Hazel Blears: The Airwave system has to pass a rigorous series of tests before being accepted by a force as being Ready For Service. The Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) continually evaluates the performance of Airwave through a national service support structure, managing any arising issues jointly with Airwave O2. As part of its Business Benefits strategy, PITO is in the process of carrying out formal base line reviews of several of the 32 forces that have fully migrated onto Airwave.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in Norfolk in each year since the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 entered into force. [1367]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the following table.

The number of ASBOs issued, as reported to the Home Office, by all courts in Norfolk, by period, up to 30 September 2004 (latest available)

	Number
1 April 1999 to31 May 2000[1]	6
1 June 2000 to31 December 2000	0
2001	12
2002	7
2003	6
1 January 2004 to 30 September 2004	26
Total	58

[1] Between 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 data were collected on aggregate numbers only by police force area (pfa).

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will break down by ethnicity the number of people who have been given antisocial behaviour orders. [1829]

Hazel Blears: Ethnicity is not collected centrally as part of the data collection of antisocial behaviour orders issued.

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children with *(a)* autism and *(b)* other brain disorders have been issued with an antisocial behaviour order. [1024]

Hazel Blears: Information is not collected centrally about the characteristics of persons issued with an antisocial behaviour order.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers who have not left the country are not claiming section 4 hard case support. [1312]

Mr. McNulty: The purpose of section 4, is to provide accommodation to failed asylum seekers who are unable to leave the country immediately due to circumstances beyond their control. There is therefore no need for failed asylum seekers genuinely unable to leave the country to be left homeless or destitute. There are no figures showing how many failed asylum seekers remain in the country.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many units of accommodation for section 4 hard case support asylum seekers are vacant, broken down by region. [1313]

Mr. McNulty: Accommodation for those receiving support under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 is not procured in advance. Instead accommodation is booked on a case by case basis, using a number of providers, at the time an applicant is granted support under section 4.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers are receiving section 4 hard case support, broken down by region. [1314]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is given in the table.

Number of people supported under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 broken down by region

Region	*Number supported as at 1 April 2005*[1]
East Midlands	440
East of England	25
Greater London	475
North East	320
North West	965
Scotland	100
South East	40
South West	185
Wales	155
West Midlands	1,140
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,335
Total	5,180

[1] Numbers are provisional and rounded to nearest 5. As a consequence they may not sum due to rounding.

BB Guns

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many recorded incidents there were in 2004 involving BB guns in England and Wales. [32]

Hazel Blears: A BB gun is an airsoft weapon firing plastic pellets and statistics have only been collected separately from April 2004. Between April and December 2004, there were 2,219 offences where the type of weapon used was a BB gun.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many recorded incidents there were in 2004 involving BB guns in North Yorkshire. [33]

Hazel Blears: A BB gun is an airsoft weapon firing plastic pellets and statistics have only been collected separately from April 2004. Between April and December 2004, there were three offences in North Yorkshire where the type of weapon used was a BB gun.

Clamped Vehicles

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who decides how much a local authority or a land owner may charge for the release of a clamped vehicle. [119]

Paul Goggins: No particular body or organisation decides how much a vehicle immobiliser operating on private land should charge for the release of a clamped vehicle. For clamping on-street or in local authority car parks in England and Wales, outside London, the level of the release fee is set by the Secretary of State for Transport. In London, the Association of London Government Transport and Environment Committee makes proposals for setting the release fee. Any change is subject to formal agreement by the Mayor.

Community Support Officers

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent assessment he has made of the contribution of community support officers to reducing *(a)* violent and *(b)* gun crime. [1384]

Hazel Blears: The interim report of the National Evaluation of Community Support Officers (CSOs) published in December 2004 (available at www.policereform.gov.uk) indicated that CSOs are having a positive impact and can have a substantial impact on some types of antisocial behaviour and lower level crime, for example vehicle related crime and personal robbery. The main aim of CSOs is to provide a visible and reassuring presence on the street. It was never intended that they should tackle areas like violent and gun crime.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the community support officers the Government plan to recruit by 2008 he expects to be posted in Coventry. [1270]

Hazel Blears: At the end of March there was 6,300 community support officers (CSOs) in England and Wales, 223 of these in the West Midlands police. As set out in our booklet "Neighbourhood Policing: your police; your community; our commitment", we will provide funding to support an increase in the numbers of CSOs to 24,000 in 2008. We will announce later in the year, following discussions with the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Association of Police Authorities what funding will be allocated for each police authority. It will be for the chief constable of the West Midlands police to determine the deployment of CSOs in the force area.

Convention on Human Trafficking

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reason the UK has not ratified the Convention on Human Trafficking; and what discussions he has had with non-governmental organisations on the decision not to ratify that Convention. [117]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 24 May 2005]:* The UK has not yet taken a decision on whether to sign the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Human Trafficking. There are certain provisions in the Convention which present concerns for the UK and which remain under active consideration. We want to resolve these issues before taking a decision on signature. We support fully all of the aims of the Convention and we too want to see widespread action to tackle this abhorrent trade at source, to protect and support the victims and bring those responsible to justice. Ministers and officials are in contact with non-governmental organisations about the Convention. The Convention was discussed during a round table meeting on trafficking held in October and further dialogue on the Convention has taken place since.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the outturn band D council tax precepts were for each police authority in England and Wales in each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06. [371]

Hazel Blears: The information is set out in the following table.

£

	Police precept on council tax (band D)				
Police authority	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Avon and Somerset	52.04	54.86	60.62	67.59	72.66
Bedfordshire	52.51	55.84	61.36	66.98	70.26
Cambridgeshire	51.03	48.24	52.11	62.46	68.04
Cheshire	51.16	53.86	56.28	61.06	64.66
Cleveland	54.87	48.43	62.55	65.58	69.51
Cumbria	58.20	72.35	78.27	84.23	90.60
Derbyshire	51.31	57.30	65.85	71.12	75.38
Devon and Cornwall	49.79	48.30	53.52	58.87	61.81
Dorset	63.59	70.61	77.13	84.42	92.25
Durham	52.20	48.60	50.40	52.65	56.43
Dyfed-Powys	48.42	59.58	72.99	85.41	90.90
Essex	54.09	62.28	65.07	67.95	71.01
Gloucestershire	51.17	57.74	68.90	77.98	82.05
Greater Manchester	54.10	56.28	60.22	62.72	64.66
Gwent	49.10	54.36	59.74	74.97	84.03
Hampshire	51.75	50.13	53.91	55.08	59.04
Hertfordshire	51.51	58.83	63.54	67.99	72.39
Humberside	52.47	52.47	54.81	60.30	85.77
Kent	51.59	48.41	52.48	55.73	60.26
Lancashire	53.25	53.41	57.69	62.60	67.89
Leicestershire	52.26	61.21	63.79	67.80	75.52
Lincolnshire	69.03	78.93	81.99	86.49	90.36
Merseyside	66.87	71.78	77.44	81.31	85.37
Metropolitan	63.27	76.48	82.51	90.95	118.85
Norfolk	50.58	53.64	64.35	72.09	83.61
Northamptonshire	70.56	69.29	76.08	79.65	83.00
Northumbria	52.73	47.67	49.82	52.06	55.65
North Wales	48.52	58.54	66.33	78.49	82.72
North Yorkshire	49.72	48.46	52.20	57.04	62.59
Nottinghamshire	49.78	54.32	61.55	65.17	70.17
South Wales	49.22	56.25	65.36	80.42	85.57
South Yorkshire	53.29	54.28	56.72	59.26	62.79
Staffordshire	54.74	72.42	78.86	83.43	94.37
Suffolk	51.39	52.38	56.16	61.11	67.14
Surrey	44.64	66.06	75.24	79.41	83.08
Sussex	51.66	50.94	53.19	55.53	59.13
Thames Valley	52.79	50.76	56.53	60.34	64.49
Warwickshire	52.24	62.09	71.18	77.57	85.17
West Mercia	50.87	53.64	59.00	74.06	78.50
West Midlands	53.20	48.99	51.19	54.77	57.21
West Yorkshire	53.17	52.41	54.76	58.73	60.82
Wiltshire	55.22	62.77	68.98	75.84	83.26

£

	Police precept on council tax (band D)			
Police authority	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Avon and Somerset	83.40	111.64	125.09	131.34
Bedfordshire	78.69	93.44	107.17	111.98
Cambridgeshire	94.59	113.31	129.33	135.54
Cheshire	73.54	88.10	97.71	102.60
Cleveland	96.13	120.22	136.84	143.68
Cumbria	100.48	130.71	150.28	155.43

£

Police authority	Police precept on council tax (band D) 2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Derbyshire	91.96	111.77	122.88	129.02
Devon and Cornwall	73.80	103.27	113.39	119.62
Dorset	103.50	123.39	135.36	142.11
Durham	64.44	79.56	91.53	96.03
Dyfed-Powys	98.10	124.11	142.65	143.10
Essex	77.67	92.97	99.27	104.76
Gloucestershire	94.01	142.59	156.71	162.90
Greater Manchester	68.86	91.65	98.52	105.41
Gwent	95.17	119.11	139.13	145.07
Hampshire	75.15	97.29	108.36	113.76
Hertfordshire	81.01	98.28	112.53	118.09
Humberside	95.40	113.04	129.96	135.72
Kent	73.64	94.95	105.66	110.88
Lancashire	73.86	87.57	100.70	107.72
Leicestershire	95.21	104.77	120.11	126.04
Lincolnshire	94.86	104.40	112.23	119.43
Merseyside	94.76	101.54	110.17	115.68
Metropolitan	130.59	159.13	184.08	196.28
Norfolk	100.35	121.95	138.69	145.53
Northamptonshire	105.25	130.09	149.43	154.41
Northumbria	58.15	63.80	66.93	70.03
North Wales	96.53	126.94	151.57	158.94
North Yorkshire	88.59	156.00	171.50	176.00
Nottinghamshire	85.17	109.30	120.12	126.01
South Wales	89.85	103.51	115.71	120.40
South Yorkshire	74.09	94.30	102.79	107.88
Staffordshire	100.93	126.50	138.44	145.28
Suffolk	82.08	109.35	119.70	125.01
Surrey	96.44	135.09	147.06	154.26
Sussex	69.84	97.74	105.12	110.25
Thames Valley	73.49	106.24	120.51	126.28
Warwickshire	101.78	117.30	126.55	132.52
West Mercia	104.50	119.80	137.69	143.17
West Midlands	61.88	71.16	80.08	83.68
West Yorkshire	75.92	88.81	102.06	107.05
Wiltshire	91.54	109.68	120.63	126.63

Source:
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the National Assembly for Wales

Crime

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's estimate is of the proportion of crimes committed which are reported to the police; and if he will make a statement. [1720]

Hazel Blears: The 2003–04 British crime survey showed that 40 per cent. of all incidents measured by the survey came to the attention of the police.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of crime was categorised as violent in the latest period for which figures are available. [1732]

Hazel Blears: Violent crime comprises of the offence groups violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery. The latest published figures relate to October-December 2004 and show that there were 295,365 recorded violent crimes which accounted for 21 per cent. of the total number of offences. Of the 295,365 recorded violent crimes, 42 per cent. involved no injury.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he is taking to *(a)* reduce street crime in Hertfordshire, *(b)* tackle binge drinking and *(c)* tackle drug-related crime; and if he will make a statement. [798]

Hazel Blears: The 10 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in Hertfordshire and the Drug Action Team (DAT) are responsible for the delivery of crime reduction and the National Drug Strategy at the local level. The performance of the CDRPs and DAT is managed by the Home Office team in the Government Office for the East of England (GO East), whose role is to support and challenge the partnerships' performance in the region. The director of this team is held accountable by the Crime Reduction Director and Drug Strategy Director in the Home Office through quarterly meetings, supplemented by performance review meetings with the Home Office performance support managers in the intervening months. The Home Office funds the ten partnerships in Hertfordshire with £1,490,102 from the Building Safer Communities Fund and £559,354 from the Basic Command Unit fund. The Government will shortly introduce the Violent Crime Reduction Bill which will target gun and knife crime and alcohol-related crime and disorder. It will toughen the laws on replica firearms, create restrictions on the sale of primers and specialist equipment for making ammunitions and it will tighten laws on airguns, powers to require certain pubs and clubs to search for guns and knives on entry, powers for the police to impose 48-hour bans on pubs and clubs persistently selling alcohol to under-18s, and the establishment of alcohol disorder zones. The CDRPs and Drug Action Team (DAT) and their constituent members in Hertfordshire are taking the following actions to tackle street crime, binge-drinking and drug-related crime in Hertfordshire.

(a) Street crime—All 10 Hertfordshire CDRPs commissioned crime audits in 2004 to identify local strategic priorities for their 2005–08 Community Safety

strategies. The CDRPs have each negotiated a three-year crime reduction target with GO-East. The progress towards the target will be measured by performance on ten crime types, two of which cover street crime. While Hertfordshire was not one of the 10 areas involved in the Street Crime Initiative, best practice is being spread between police forces through the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Home Office's Police Standards Unit. This is to ensure that the lessons that have been learnt from the Street Crime Initiative can benefit all forces. Several of the Hertfordshire CDRPs have identified specific strategic priorities around street crime. These include Broxbourne and North and East Herts, aiming to make town centres safer, Stevenage, aiming to reduce alcohol-related crime in the town centre and leisure park, and Watford, aiming to make the town safer at night.

(b) Binge Drinking—Hertfordshire County Council have instigated a £400,000 project to reduce alcohol-related antisocial behaviour and curb alcohol abuse. This includes the launch of a website aimed at 13–17 year olds which has extensive information about the risks of alcohol among other material. Among individual initiatives by Hertfordshire CDRPs, Stevenage have planned a number of actions including a requirement that all public entertainment licensed premises should have a drugs policy by April 2006; regular joint licensee inspection visits from the police and the council; a ban on irresponsible drink promotions and support for the licensed industry's voluntary code on low priced promotions; and encouraging licensed premises to participate in the Club/Pub Watch scheme that contains a banning/exclusion order facility. These measures will be supported by GIS mapping of alcohol related crime and disorder and fixed penalty enforcement.

(c) Tackling Drug-Related Crime During 2004–05—Hertfordshire DAT has introduced the Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) within the area. The aim of DIP is to reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs by substantially increasing the number of drug-misusing offenders entering treatment through the criminal justice system. Government funding for DIP in Hertfordshire in 2005–06 is £1,038,586 (this includes £530,842 arrest referral grant). Hertfordshire has set a target of 600 DIP clients for 2005–06, of which 450 will be 'generic' DIP clients and 150 specifically Prolific and Priority Offender (PPO) DIP clients. More recently the PPO project has also been introduced in the area. The project has already engaged a large number of people in hard-to-reach target groups in structured treatment. This project is now ready to be rolled out to the whole of Hertfordshire. GO East and the CDRPs are also funding MIDAS, a web-based database for crime, disorder, drugs, alcohol and community safety information, for the use of all partners involved in Community Safety. Hertfordshire DAT and the CDRPs within the area are working towards integrating their work.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers are stationed in Hammersmith and Fulham constituency. [827]

Hazel Blears: On 31 March 2005 there were 522.15 full-time equivalent police officers stationed in the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, 10 more than in March 2004. The deployment of police officers within the Metropolitan Police Service is a matter for the Commissioner.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many anti-social behaviour orders have been issued in the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham during the past 12 months. [851]

Hazel Blears: The number of anti-social behaviour orders issued at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, from 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004 (latest available), where restrictions are imposed in the London borough of Hammersmith, is six.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he and his Department have had with the *(a)* Police Borough Commander for Hammersmith and Fulham and *(b)* her officers. [852]

Hazel Blears: I attended a meeting of Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Partnership on 23 March 2005 for a discussion on police reform at which the Police Borough Commander was present. I have not specifically met with her officers.

Dispersal Orders

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many dispersal orders have been made in Leeds since January 2004. [1719]

Hazel Blears: The Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police tells me that since January 2004 six areas in Leeds have been designated under section 30 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to assess the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004. [569]

Hazel Blears: The Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 is the biggest overhaul of legislation on domestic violence in the last 30 years. It received Royal Assent on 15 November 2004 and contains a wide range of reforms on domestic violence, crime and victims and witnesses. The provisions in the Act will be commenced in stages during 2005. The table gives a brief outline of some measures in the Act and the plans to assess their effectiveness, once they have been implemented. The measures specifically relating to domestic violence will run alongside the broader set of national performance indicators, published in our National Report on Domestic Violence, in March this year. The indicators will be used to measure the effectiveness of our domestic violence strategy over the medium and long term.

Section	*Measure*	*Plans to Asses Effectiveness*
1–4	Domestic Violence—Amendments to the Family Law Act 1996	Comparative case study analysis to be conducted in areas to assess impact of the provisions.
5–8	Causing or allowing the death of a child or vulnerable adult	Offence and procedural measures will be kept under review.
9	Domestic homicide reviews (extends to NI)	Plans for how the reviews will be monitored are still under consideration
10	Common Assault to be an arrestable offence (extends to NI)	Police forces will routinely collect data on arrests. The data will be monitored on a quarterly basis under PPAF, giving us an indication of the impact of this measure on local policing.
12–13	Restraining orders	Will be monitored as part of the National DV Performance indicators
14–16	Surcharge	Number of surcharges imposed and amount of revenue collected will be monitored by DCA
17–20	Trial by jury of sample counts only	Applications made by the prosecution, the number granted and the outcome of trials will be monitored
27	Fine enforcement—powers of authorised officers executing warrants	Guidance and training to be rolled out by HMCS
28,29	Fine enforcement—disclosure orders and procedure on breach of community penalty	Guidance and training to be rolled out by HMCS
32–34	Victims Measures Code of Practice	Satisfaction of victims will be assessed using PPAF, User Satisfaction Measures, the Witness and Victim Experience Survey and the British Crime Survey.
47–55	Victims Commissioner,	Plans for how the Commissioner will operate are still under consideration. However, the Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses will be required to produce an annual report, which must be provided to the Home Secretary, Attorney General and Lord Chancellor, then published and laid before Parliament.
55	Victims Advisory Panel,	An annual report, setting out the panels achievements for the year will be published and laid before Parliament.

Europol

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the causal requirement for Council Decision 2005/169/EC, adding Israel to the list of states with which the Director of Europol may conduct negotiations. [493]

Andy Burnham: The Europol Convention provides for Europol to establish and maintain relations with third states where this is necessary for Europol to perform its functions as described in the Convention. The rules governing these relations provide for Europol to conclude agreements to, in particular, exchange liaison officers and share information. Any agreement to share personal data would be subject to an opinion of the independent Joint Supervisory Body established by the Convention. This Council Decision, of 24 February 2005, adds Israel to the list of states with which the Director of Europol may enter into negotiations. The Government considers the negotiation of a co-operation agreement with Israel to be a useful step in the fight against serious and organised cross-border crime.

Football Banning Orders

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many football banning orders are in place; and how many of these prevent the person from travelling abroad to watch football matches. [1315]

Paul Goggins: As at 25 May 2005 there were 2,982 persons subject to football banning orders. In accordance with their banning order conditions, all of these individuals are prohibited from attending regulated football matches played at home and overseas.

Happy Slapping

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to tackle the practice known as happy slapping. [1143]

Hazel Blears: There are a number of offences which cover the practice of "happy slapping". These include common assault and battery where one person recklessly or intentionally causes another person to fear immediate violence or to sustain unlawful personal violence, plus a range of offences where actual injury is caused. Maximum penalties range from six months' imprisonment for common assault up to life for wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. The Government take the issue of violent crime and its impact on people's lives very seriously. Even though the British Crime Survey shows that violent crime has fallen by 26 per cent. since 1997, it fully recognises public concern and is taking forward several initiatives to tackle violent crime in all its forms and make the country as safe as possible for law-abiding citizens. In particular, the Government will shortly introduce the Violent Crime Reduction Bill which will target irresponsible drinking, imitation firearms and knives.

Householders (Police Guidance)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued to the police in the use of reasonable force by householders defending themselves, others or property from intruders. [1366]

Hazel Blears: The Crown Prosecution Service and the Association of Chief Police Officers issued guidance in February 2005 which sets out in plain language what householders' rights are and the level of force that they can use if faced with an intruder in their home. In supporting this, the Home Office has issued general guidance which is contained in our "Guide to Home Security" and "Be Safe, Be Secure" leaflets and on the Crime Reduction website www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

Identity Cards

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the contribution identity cards may make to the prevention of terrorist attacks on the UK. [1269]

Mr. McNulty: Dialogue has been ongoing with the security services in relation to the effectiveness of the proposed identity card. The security services have said that an ID card will help in tackling terrorism. The Security Service have stated that a card scheme would disrupt the use of false identities by terrorist organisations, for example in money laundering and organised crime. We know that at least one-third of terrorist suspects make use of false identities. An ID card will reduce the opportunity for those facilitating terrorist and organised criminals to operate using multiple identities. The scheme would also be a useful tool in helping to monitor and disrupt the support activities of terrorist networks.

Identity Theft

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to ensure that police forces are trained to deal with cases of identity theft from mobile telephones. [1261]

Hazel Blears: *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* The National Specialist Law Enforcement Centre (NSLEC), which is part of Centrex, is responsible for developing and delivering training for the police service to equip them to tackle high tech crime. Training courses are available at all levels, from new recruits through to specialist investigators. In addition, the National Mobile Phone Crime Unit (NMPCU) has developed a National Mobile Phone Register to hold information on registered mobile phones, information on crime reports from police forces and information from the mobile phone industry's own lost or stolen list. About a third of forces are making use of this system and the unit is working to make the register available to all forces in England and Wales.

Kent County Council Act

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had concerning the operation of the Kent County Council Act 2001; whether he has consulted with persons or bodies representing traders in secondhand car parts, known as autojumbles on the operation of the Act; and if he will make a statement. [1631]

Hazel Blears: There have been no consultations by the Home Office on the Kent County Council Act. We are planning to consult on the licensing of secondhand traders later in the year. All interested parties will have the opportunity to participate.

Notting Hill Carnival

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total cost was of policing the Notting Hill Carnival in 2004. [1387]

Hazel Blears: The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis is responsible for the operational management of the force. I will ensure that he receives a copy of the question and replies to you directly in response to your concerns.

Police

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on steps taken by his Department to maintain the public's confidence in the police in rural areas. [1373]

Hazel Blears: The Government see neighbourhood policing as central to further reducing crime and people's fear of crime and increasing public trust and confidence in policing. The Government have made a commitment that by 2008, every area in England and Wales will benefit from dedicated neighbourhood policing teams which will be led by police officers and involve Special Constables, Community Support Officers, volunteers and neighbourhood wardens among others. These teams will provide a visible, accessible and responsive police presence in rural and urban areas. By the end of 2005, every force in England and Wales will have a pathfinder area (in what are known as Basic Command Units). Forces will be able to develop local approaches to neighbourhood policing which are tailored to their local needs, including those for rural areas. New measures have been introduced to the policing performance assessment framework which report on customer satisfaction with the services delivered by the police and public confidence in the police in the local area.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there are in the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham; and how many there were in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [2100]

Hazel Blears: Prior to 31 March 2002, data on the number of police officers were collected at police force area level only. The number of police officers in Hammersmith and Fulham on 31 March 2004 was 516.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to re-introduce police foot patrols in Hertfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [757]

Hazel Blears: Foot patrols in Hertfordshire are an operational matter for the chief constable. However, the Government have committed to ensuring that every community in England and Wales benefits from neighbourhood policing by 2008. This will ensure that every area has dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams. Hertfordshire are currently moving towards a system of neighbourhood policing.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average age of a police officer was in *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 2000 and *(c)* 2005. [131]

Hazel Blears: Statistics on the age of police officers were collected annually for the first time as at 31 March 2003 but only in age groups. The latest available data show that, of the 140,070 officers in post in England and Wales police forces on 31 March 2004, 14,148 (or 10 per cent.) were aged 25 or under; 75,309 (or 54 per cent.) were aged 26 to 40; 50,028 (or 36 per cent.) were aged 41 to 55; and 585 (or 0.4 per cent.) were over 55.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much total Government grant was given to each police force in England and Wales in each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06; and what the per capita allocation was in each case. [370]

Hazel Blears: The information is set out in the tables. Government funding for police authorities is chiefly allocated using a funding formula that distributes resources on the basis of relative policing need. The formula is currently being reviewed to ensure it remains up to date. Funding is not, and never has been, distributed on a per capita basis.

Government grant funding[1] per head of population[2]

Force	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	£ *2005–06[3]*
Avon and Somerset	94.52	96.85	97.60	101.29	112.31	110.22	117.39	120.77	125.49
Bedfordshire[4]	95.82	96.93	95.42	99.91	107.94	115.13	117.69	120.44	125.62
Cambridgeshire[4]	84.24	87.30	89.35	92.80	103.72	100.6	111.81	116.00	118.97
Cheshire	88.91	91.34	95.57	100.23	106.51	108.87	120.31	120.39	123.62
Cleveland	122.58	132.06	134.19	140.03	149.03	158.15	168.44	175.11	177.98
Cumbria	105.43	106.94	108.60	113.77	123.88	125.25	130.76	135.46	141.44
Derbyshire	88.59	91.52	94.26	95.21	106.24	105.08	112.59	116.26	119.64
Devon and Cornwall	88.03	94.04	96.17	100.10	109.74	109.40	113.28	116.67	120.96
Dorset	81.70	85.94	88.70	87.33	94.50	93.65	98.53	100.74	104.65
Durham	108.52	117.57	123.08	129.27	137.27	138.87	149.86	154.87	161.61
Dyfed-Powys	89.53	91.34	91.32	96.95	110.74	111.64	114.57	118.27	121.54
Essex[4]	90.59	88.26	90.52	92.21	98.03	101.92	106.25	108.17	112.77
Gloucestershire	93.57	94.74	94.35	97.93	107.57	107.25	112.38	115.68	120.93
Greater Manchester	125.21	129.03	132.87	137.74	153.33	152.00	170.22	173.81	179.98
Gwent	102.95	106.10	111.61	115.73	126.18	129.56	138.57	142.41	147.54
Hampshire[4]	87.91	92.20	94.15	97.52	104.24	107.44	117.24	116.75	119.88
Hertfordshire[4]	90.49	91.73	97.52	94.07	101.20	101.12	106.09	109.56	114.00
Humberside	108.87	114.29	114.32	120.40	129.41	128.70	139.33	143.30	147.74
Kent[4]	96.07	99.44	100.23	105.36	114.39	115.83	127.30	126.86	130.45
Lancashire	104.63	109.53	110.95	118.32	130.73	127.88	137.07	141.25	146.92
Leicestershire	92.34	93.20	97.15	100.26	110.95	109.14	117.60	120.66	126.77
Lincolnshire	88.35	84.49	88.14	94.19	97.01	103.85	103.26	105.18	108.04
Merseyside	150.14	152.59	154.54	160.78	170.52	180.66	195.25	201.12	206.87
Metropolitan[4]	211.79	212.42	213.96	227.70	243.7	261.46	282.32	286.29	300.33
Norfolk	91.37	91.84	90.65	95.41	103.19	106.33	115.66	115.34	118.40
Northamptonshire	87.97	90.37	91.62	96.41	102.33	102.91	113.48	112.38	117.23
Northumbria	126.11	134.98	138.05	140.95	155.45	153.22	166.88	174.22	181.36
North Wales	95.01	96.33	98.35	102.77	112.54	119.44	123.90	126.40	131.70
North Yorkshire	85.44	90.25	89.77	90.97	101.44	98.66	103.85	106.81	110.74
Nottinghamshire	106.07	108.74	114.03	116.53	120.55	127.38	133.93	138.00	141.71
South Wales	115.87	117.36	119.86	123.00	132.89	135.82	141.69	151.08	156.51
South Yorkshire	111.96	115.56	120.09	124.84	131.32	136.97	151.74	153.79	158.25
Staffordshire	95.05	94.50	94.51	96.45	102.10	104.48	114.46	115.22	119.66
Suffolk	81.66	84.42	89.14	91.93	102.94	100.07	107.25	109.52	112.80
Surrey[4]	101.66	89.09	98.45	89.29	86.54	85.61	93.18	94.02	95.76
Sussex[4]	90.44	93.48	95.87	96.93	102.97	107.57	113.67	116.26	120.70
Thames Valley[4]	85.97	89.94	90.48	93.06	103.42	104.22	109.72	113.04	116.87
Warwickshire	86.87	86.31	87.33	96.42	115.96	101.02	110.78	108.99	111.49
West Mercia	82.23	82.82	86.62	91.42	108.57	97.88	101.72	103.67	107.12
West Midlands	122.96	129.04	132.80	138.23	146.43	151.75	171.37	171.89	181.53
West Yorkshire	115.77	119.90	122.66	129.50	136.76	142.78	152.91	157.36	163.55
Wiltshire	90.79	91.08	91.08	95.26	103.05	102.92	106.93	109.35	112.89

[1] Government funding includes general grant (Home Office police grant, ODPM/Welsh Assembly Government Revenue Support Grant and National Non-Domestic Rates). It also includes specific grants: Crime Fighting Fund, Rural Policing Fund, Basic Command Unit funding, Community Support Officer funding (including, for 2004–05 and 2005–06, Round 1 of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund), Airwave, DNA Expansion Programme, Counter Terrorism funding (MPS only), Street Crime Initiative, Special Priority Payments and capital grants.

[2] Source for resident population figures: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Welsh Assembly Government as used in the calculation of the police funding settlements.

[3] Estimates for 2005–06.

[4] The Home Office also funds 75 per cent. of the cost of the London and South East allowances for all qualifying officers. These figures are not included within the totals.

Total government grants[1]

Police authority	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*[2]	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*£ million* *2005–06*[3]
Avon and Somerset	138.3	142.1	144.3	150.8	168.6	166.1	174.1	180.0	189.3
Bedfordshire[4]	52.3	53.2	52.7	55.6	60.7	65.1	66.7	68.8	72.1
Cambridgeshire[4]	58.5	61.4	63.6	66.8	75.2	73.5	79.4	83.1	86.8
Cheshire	87.0	89.5	93.9	98.7	104.7	107.2	118.3	118.7	122.4
Cleveland	68.5	73.6	74.6	77.9	82.9	88.0	91.2	94.8	98.7
Cumbria	51.7	52.5	53.4	56.1	60.9	61.5	63.8	66.2	69.3
Derbyshire	84.9	88.0	91.0	92.4	103.5	102.7	107.7	111.9	116.8
Devon and Cornwall	135.7	145.1	149.2	156.0	172.2	173.6	178.8	185.6	193.7
Dorset	55.4	58.6	61.0	60.4	65.4	65.4	68.3	70.1	73.2
Durham	65.9	71.5	74.9	78.6	83.3	84.3	88.7	91.4	95.7
Dyfed-Powys	42.6	43.5	43.6	46.5	53.2	53.9	55.9	58.4	60.6
Essex[4]	136.4	133.6	137.9	148.1	158.6	166.0	171.7	175.5	183.8
Gloucestershire	51.7	52.7	52.8	54.6	60.4	60.6	63.5	65.6	68.7
Greater Manchester	322.8	332.3	341.7	355.0	395.1	393.0	422.6	436.9	455.5
Gwent	57.3	59.0	62.2	64.5	70.2	72.2	76.6	78.9	81.9
Hampshire[4]	153.1	161.6	165.9	172.7	185.7	191.9	208.5	208.9	215.4
Hertfordshire[4]	77.7	79.2	85.0	97.2	105.6	106.3	109.8	113.5	118.7
Humberside	96.8	101.3	101.1	106.3	114.1	113.4	121.1	124.8	130.3
Kent[4]	149.0	154.9	157.0	165.9	181.6	185.1	201.2	201.6	208.7
Lancashire	149.2	156.0	158.1	168.8	186.4	182.8	194.0	200.9	210.0
Leicestershire	85.2	86.4	90.3	93.1	103.7	102.4	108.7	112.7	119.0
Lincolnshire	54.1	52.0	54.6	58.7	61.0	65.9	66.9	69.2	71.9
Merseyside	214.3	216.7	218.4	226.6	239.3	253.5	265.9	273.7	282.2
Metropolitan[4]	1,587.5	1,606.8	1,629.3	1,635.4	1,773.9	1,676.3	2,027.3	2,103.6	2,216.4
Norfolk	70.6	71.4	71.0	75.4	82.2	85.5	92.3	92.6	96.0
Northamptonshire	52.7	54.6	55.9	59.4	63.6	64.4	71.5	71.7	75.3
Northumbria	181.4	193.6	197.4	200.9	220.5	216.7	230.9	240.8	252.5
North Wales	62.4	63.2	64.5	67.6	74.0	78.9	82.2	84.5	88.3
North Yorkshire	62.4	66.3	66.2	67.5	75.8	74.4	78.0	80.7	84.1
Nottinghamshire	109.5	112.2	117.7	120.2	124.5	131.4	136.0	141.2	145.9
South Wales	142.3	144.6	148.2	152.4	165.0	169.2	169.8	181.6	189.9
South Yorkshire	146.0	150.8	156.7	162.8	171.0	178.3	192.2	194.9	201.4
Staffordshire	100.4	99.8	100.2	102.4	108.3	110.7	119.9	120.7	125.5
Suffolk	53.6	55.9	59.4	61.7	69.4	68.0	71.8	73.6	76.5
Surrey[4]	78.8	69.2	77.2	94.7	93.3	92.5	98.7	99.7	101.9
Sussex[4]	132.2	137.6	142.6	145.3	156.0	163.8	170.0	174.4	181.8
Thames Valley[4]	176.0	185.8	188.7	195.3	218.9	221.8	229.6	237.3	246.9
Warwickshire	43.3	43.2	44.0	48.9	58.9	51.5	56.1	55.9	57.9
West Mercia	91.6	92.6	97.6	103.9	123.8	112.2	117.9	121.1	125.7
West Midlands	324.3	341.0	349.3	363.1	384.6	397.4	437.7	442.8	468.1
West Yorkshire	243.8	252.9	258.8	273.7	289.3	302.9	318.1	328.8	342.8
Wiltshire	53.6	54.0	54.6	57.7	62.9	63.1	65.6	67.5	70.2

[1] Total government grants includes general grant (Home Office police grant, ODPM/Welsh Assembly Government Revenue Support Grant and National Non- Domestic Rates). It also includes specific grants: Crime Fighting Fund, Rural Policing Fund, Basic Command Unit funding, Community Support Officers funding (including for 2004–05 and 2005–06, Round 1 of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund), Airwave, DNA Expansion Programme, Counter Terrorism funding (MPS only), Street Crime Initiative, Special Priority Payments and capital grants.

[2] Figures for 2001–02 are not directly comparable with 2002–03 due to the change in funding arrangements of NCS/NCIS.

[3] Estimates for 2005–06.

[4] The Home Office also funds 75 per cent. of the cost of the London and South East allowances for all qualifying officers. These figures are not included within the totals.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers, excluding support staff and community support officers, were employed in each police authority in England and Wales in each year since 1997. [373]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is given in the following table.

Police strength by police force full-time equivalents

				March					*September*
England and Wales	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	[1]*2003*	[1]*2004*	[1]*2004*
Avon and Somerset	2,989	2,976	2,999	2,934	2,994	3,096	3,149	3,401	3,399
Bedfordshire	1,094	1,079	1,041	1,028	1,036	1,069	1,106	1,181	1,204
Cambridgeshire	1,302	1,291	1,274	1,237	1,296	1,362	1,384	1,400	1,413
Cheshire	2,046	2,042	2,071	2,011	2,002	2,059	2,119	2,179	2,159
Cleveland	1,459	1,483	1,416	1,404	1,407	1,461	1,582	1,687	1,591
Cumbria	1,144	1,164	1,126	1,084	1,048	1,100	1,140	1,222	1,227
Derbyshire	1,791	1,772	1,759	1,777	1,823	1,848	2,003	2,070	2,055
Devon and Cornwall	2,865	2,962	2,887	2,841	2,934	3,053	3,202	3,298	3,310
Dorset	1,284	1,310	1,279	1,306	1,354	1,381	1,416	1,433	1,447
Durham	1,461	1,515	1,568	1,558	1,595	1,614	1,651	1,685	1,680
Essex	2,961	2,928	2,891	2,806	2,897	2,946	2,989	3,098	3,093
Gloucestershire	1,133	1,104	1,104	1,114	1,173	1,183	1,227	1,284	1,269
Greater Manchester	6,922	6,949	6,810	6,795	6,909	7,217	7,343	8,042	8,083
Hampshire	3,452	3,490	3,473	3,419	3,438	3,480	3,668	3,706	3,744
Hertfordshire	1,759	1,740	1,724	1,767	1,922	1,825	1,957	2,086	2,135
Humberside	2,045	2,021	1,974	1,932	1,917	2,058	2,105	2,213	2,243
Kent	3,260	3,251	3,201	3,204	3,319	3,355	3,487	3,576	3,578

Police strength by police force full-time equivalents

England and Wales	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*March 2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*[1]2003*	*[1]2004*	*September [1]2004*
Lancashire	3,247	3,257	3,245	3,179	3,255	3,304	3,339	3,550	3,544
Leicestershire	1,949	1,983	1,993	1,993	2,032	2,100	2,114	2,277	2,263
Lincolnshire	1,196	1,191	1,140	1,115	1,202	1,198	1,221	1,228	1,216
London, City of	859	825	778	732	703	764	808	853	875
Merseyside	4,230	4,216	4,211	4,085	4,081	4,125	4,099	4,122	4,257
Metropolitan Police	26,677	26,094	26,073	25,485	24,878	26,223	27,984	29,735	30,111
Norfolk	1,432	1,430	1,381	1,381	1,420	1,468	1,499	1,510	1,536
Northamptonshire	1,177	1,169	1,137	1,117	1,157	1,214	1,210	1,239	1,264
Northumbria	3,677	3,769	3,840	3,788	3,857	3,929	3,943	4,040	4,067
North Yorkshire	1,338	1,367	1,337	1,283	1,305	1,417	1,444	1,529	1,537
Nottinghamshire	2,323	2,323	2,225	2,204	2,275	2,330	2,411	2,484	2,526
South Yorkshire	3,159	3,182	3,168	3,163	3,197	3,199	3,183	3,278	3,315
Staffordshire	2,211	2,292	2,238	2,170	2,129	2,133	2,202	2,266	2,283
Suffolk	1,180	1,186	1,190	1,145	1,133	1,203	1,253	1,304	1,310
Surrey	1,620	1,608	1,662	1,785	2,066	1,992	1,906	1,913	1,894
Sussex	3,065	2,996	2,847	2,822	2,855	2,893	2,989	3,039	3,075
Thames Valley	3,695	3,776	3,748	3,740	3,703	3,762	3,833	4,034	4,160
Warwickshire	926	924	908	900	926	969	997	1,008	1,002
West Mercia	2,040	2,010	2,025	1,887	1,951	2,018	2,256	2,355	2,302
West Midlands	7,113	7,156	7,321	7,194	7,423	7,681	7,751	7,887	8,030
West Yorkshire	5,209	5,155	4,982	4,822	4,815	4,889	5,029	5,275	5,446
Wiltshire	1,154	1,156	1,151	1,118	1,120	1,157	1,158	1,217	1,213
Dyfed-Powys	1,005	1,002	1,026	1,040	1,055	1,132	1,149	1,167	1,172
Gwent	1,243	1,233	1,247	1,264	1,274	1,333	1,341	1,372	1,415
North Wales	1,369	1,396	1,391	1,403	1,444	1,506	1,539	1,603	1,601
South Wales	2,976	2,986	2,981	2,926	3,154	3,222	3,239	3,279	3,260
Total all forces	125,051	124,756	123,841	121,956	123,476	127,267	131,426	137,128	138,305

[1] All officers (FTE) less staff on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave (comparable with previously published figures)

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what obstacles there are to the retention of biometric data on the police national computer database. [1790]

Hazel Blears: There are no obstacles to the retention of biometric data. The Police National Computer (PNC) has markers that indicate if biometric data has been taken (fingerprints or DNA) primary biometric data, in the form of fingerprints, is held on the IDENT1 (previously NAFIS) service. DNA data is held on the DNA database, managed by the Forensic Science Service.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to increase the numbers of full-time police officers over the next five years *(a)* in England and Wales and *(b)* in Norfolk. [1371]

Hazel Blears: In line with our manifesto commitment we will carry on funding the police service to enable it to continue to employ historically high numbers of police officers. There were 140,135 police officers in England and Wales at the end of September 2004 and 1,536 in the Norfolk constabulary There are 6,300 community support officers (CSO) as of 31 March 2005, including 69 in Norfolk. Our booklet "Neighbourhood Policing: your police; your community; our commitment" (published in March 2005) set out plans for effective neighbourhood policing over the period to 2008. This includes freeing up the equivalent of 12,000 police officers from back-office bureaucracy and our plans to provide funding to support an increase to 24,000 CSOs by 2008, through the Neighbourhood Policing Fund.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many full-time police officers are serving in Norfolk. [1385]

Hazel Blears: The full-time equivalent police officer strength for Norfolk was 1,536 as at 30 September 2004.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers assigned to Chiltern Vale Police, broken down by rank, left Thames Valley Police for other police forces in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and if he will list those other police forces. [1517]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Police Precepts

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total revenue raised from police precepts was in each police authority in England and Wales for each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06. [372]

Hazel Blears: The information is set out in the following table.

£ million

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Avon and Somerset	25.6	27.2	30.6	34.4	37.4
Bedfordshire	9.5	10.2	11.3	12.5	13.3
Cambridgeshire	11.7	11.2	12.3	14.9	16.5
Cheshire	17.1	18.3	19.4	21.2	22.6
Cleveland	8.6	7.6	9.9	10.4	11.2
Cumbria	9.2	11.6	12.6	13.7	14.9
Derbyshire	15.1	17.0	19.8	21.6	23.2
Devon and Cornwall	26.3	25.8	28.9	32.2	34.2
Dorset	16.6	18.6	20.7	22.7	24.9
Durham	8.9	8.3	8.7	9.1	9.9

	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	£ million 2001–02
Dyfed-Powys	8.2	10.2	12.6	14.9	16.1
Essex	29.3	34.1	36.1	40.2	42.5
Gloucestershire	10.0	11.4	13.8	15.8	16.8
Greater Manchester	40.2	42.0	45.0	47.1	48.9
Gwent	8.7	9.7	10.7	13.7	15.4
Hampshire	31.8	31.1	33.6	34.7	37.5
Hertfordshire	17.6	20.2	22.0	28.1	30.2
Humberside	13.4	13.6	14.3	15.9	22.7
Kent	28.7	27.2	29.8	31.9	34.8
Lancashire	22.9	23.1	25.2	27.6	30.2
Leicestershire	14.5	17.1	18.1	19.4	21.8
Lincolnshire	13.4	15.5	16.3	17.5	18.7
Merseyside	27.0	29.1	31.4	33.2	35.3
Metropolitan	181.8	222.3	241.3	248.2	324.6
Norfolk	13.0	14.0	17.0	19.3	22.6
Northamptonshire	13.4	13.4	15.1	16.0	17.0
Northumbria	21.3	19.4	20.3	21.2	22.9
North Wales	11.2	13.6	15.7	18.8	20.0
North Yorkshire	13.0	12.8	14.0	15.4	17.2
Nottinghamshire	14.9	16.4	18.7	20.0	21.7
South Wales	19.5	22.4	26.2	32.5	34.8
South Yorkshire	18.9	19.3	20.2	21.2	22.6
Staffordshire	17.7	23.6	25.8	27.5	31.5
Suffolk	11.3	11.7	12.6	13.9	15.5
Surrey	15.0	22.5	25.7	36.9	38.9
Sussex	29.1	29.0	30.6	32.2	34.6
Thames Valley	40.6	39.5	44.5	47.9	51.7
Warwickshire	9.2	11.0	12.8	14.0	15.7
West Mercia	19.7	21.0	23.4	29.8	32.0
West Midlands	39.6	36.6	38.4	41.3	43.3
West Yorkshire	31.8	31.8	33.5	36.2	37.9
Wiltshire	11.8	13.6	15.1	16.8	18.7

	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	£ million 2005–06
Avon and Somerset	43.4	58.6	66.3	70.3
Bedfordshire	15.0	18.0	20.9	22.1
Cambridgeshire	23.1	28.0	32.6	34.6
Cheshire	25.9	31.3	35.0	37.0
Cleveland	15.5	19.5	22.4	23.8
Cumbria	16.6	21.8	25.7	26.8
Derbyshire	28.5	34.9	38.7	40.9
Devon and Cornwall	41.2	58.2	65.8	70.1
Dorset	28.1	33.8	37.9	40.5
Durham	11.4	14.1	16.4	17.4
Dyfed-Powys	17.5	22.4	26.1	28.0
Essex	46.8	56.5	60.8	64.8
Gloucestershire	19.4	29.6	33.0	34.6
Greater Manchester	52.2	69.8	75.5	81.1
Gwent	17.7	22.4	26.4	28.5
Hampshire	48.2	62.8	70.9	75.0
Hertfordshire	33.9	41.4	47.7	50.3
Humberside	25.5	30.7	35.9	37.8
Kent	42.8	55.9	63.0	67.0
Lancashire	33.1	39.6	45.9	49.41
Leicestershire	27.9	31.0	35.9	38.2
Lincolnshire	19.9	22.3	24.3	26.2
Merseyside	39.3	42.3	46.2	48.9
Metropolitan	361.4	443.7	521.3	560.5
Norfolk	27.4	33.7	39.0	41.3
Northamptonshire	22.0	27.7	32.2	33.7
Northumbria	24.1	26.6	28.1	29.6
North Wales	23.6	31.3	38.0	42.4
North Yorkshire	24.6	43.6	49.0	50.6
Nottinghamshire	26.5	34.4	38.	40.4
South Wales	36.7	42.7	48.4	52.9
South Yorkshire	26.9	34.4	38.	40.0
Staffordshire	34.0	43.1	47.	50.3
Suffolk	19.1	25.7	28.	30.2
Surrey	45.4	63.8	69.	73.8
Sussex	41.1	57.9	63.	67.1
Thames Valley	59.2	86.1	98.	104.2
Warwickshire	19.0	22.1	24.	25.5

	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	£ million 2005–06
West Mercia	43.0	49.7	57.	60.7
West Midlands	47.2	54.5	61.	64.6
West Yorkshire	47.8	56.1	64.	69.0
Wiltshire	20.7	25.2	27.	29.6

Source:
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the National Assembly for Wales.

Police/Crime Statistics

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to increase police numbers in Hertfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [838]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 25 May 2005]:* The number of police officers in Hertfordshire Constabulary stood at 2,135 on 30 September 2004. This is a record figure and represents a steady increase since March 2002. Since 2000 we have provided money for additional recruits under the Crime Fighting Fund, which in Hertfordshire's case stands at 113 officers. Any further increases are a matter for the Chief Constable and the police authority. In addition, Hertfordshire Constabulary had 99 community support officers at the end of March, an increase of 53 on 12 months earlier.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there are in Wales. [1068]

Hazel Blears: On the 30 September 2004, there were 7,501 full-time equivalent police officers in Wales.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firearms offences were recorded by the police in Wales in 2004. [1079]

Hazel Blears: There were 265 firearms offences recorded in Wales in 2004.

Police Support Staff

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average cost of employing a *(a)* community warden or neighbourhood warden, *(b)* police community support officer and *(c)* police constable in England is expected to be in 2005–06. [1099]

Hazel Blears: Records of the average cost to local police forces of employing neighbourhood wardens, community support officers (CSOs) and police constables are not kept centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, information available to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister indicates that neighbourhood warden salaries in 2003 ranged, on average, between about £13,900 and £15,600. The interim report of the National Evaluation of Community Support Officers published in December 2004 (available at www.policereform.gov.uk) found that, of the forces surveyed, the minimum pay point, excluding allowances, for CSOs ranged nationally from £14,094 to £19,626 and the maximum ranged from £15,408 to £25,356. The pay scales for police constables range from £19,803 for a newly recruited officer, rising to £31,092 for a constable with 11 years service. Additional allowances may be payable such as a competence-related threshold payment, London weighting, London allowance, special priority payments.

Postal Votes

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what police investigations are ongoing into allegations of electoral fraud involving postal votes; and what the outcome has been of each completed police investigation into allegations of electoral fraud involving postal votes since 1997. [410]

Hazel Blears: One case of alleged electoral fraud involving postal votes is under investigation. Five other allegations have been investigated and are not being further pursued. No other information is held centrally.

Probation Reports

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what circumstances the Probation Service is asked to issue a report on a person convicted of an offence before that person is sentenced. [1220]

Hazel Blears: It is for the court to request a Pre-Sentence Report from the Probation Service on a person convicted of an offence before sentence. The Probation Service is statutorily obliged to provide a Pre-Sentence Report when the court requests one.

Stop and Search

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has conducted research into the impact on the use of police time of the requirement to make a record of all stop and searches. [1370]

Hazel Blears: We published, "The views of the public on the phased implementation of recording police stops" (Home Office Development and Practice report—22) and, "An evaluation of the phased implementation of the recording of police stops" (Home Office Development and Practice report—23), in July 2004. Both reports comment on officers' recording practices, including the time officers spent on recording 'stops' and searches.

Tetra Transmission

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of whether there is an intermittent transitory impact on calcium ion concentration in rat cerebellar granule cells as a result of the switching on of Tetra transmission. [913]

Hazel Blears: Recent research carried out for the Home Office by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory has not been able to identify any effects on calcium exchanges between cells as a result of Tetra transmissions.

Traffic Officials

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* traffic enforcement officers, *(b)* traffic wardens and *(c)* council parking attendants have been operating in each police authority area in each year since 2002–03. [2293]

Hazel Blears: Information on traffic enforcement officers and council parking attendants is not collected centrally. The statistics for traffic wardens are given in the table.

Traffic wardens by police force area: 2002–03 and 2003–04

Force	*Number of wardens* *2002–03*	*2003–04*
Avon and Somerset	43	34
Bedfordshire	2	2
Cambridgeshire	35	17
Cheshire	19	15
Cleveland	7	8
Cumbria	0	0
Derbyshire	48	43
Devon and Cornwall	103	102
Dorset	0	0
Durham	15	4
Dyfed-Powys	13	10
Essex	38	21
Gloucestershire	31	21
Greater Manchester	88	88
Gwent	27	25
Hampshire	25	23
Hertfordshire	38	9
Humberside	48	46
Kent	0	0
Lancashire	50	17
Leicestershire	61	51
Linconshire	21	18
City of London	0	0
Merseyside	52	43
Metropolitan Police	687	505
Norfolk	33	31
Northamptonshire	7	5
Northumbria	59	56
North Wales	7	5
North Yorkshire	0	10
Nottinghamshire	29	33
South Wales	99	92
South Yorkshire	68	37
Staffordshire	10	1
Suffolk	25	25
Surrey	17	8
Sussex	61	67
Thames Valley	42	36
Warwickshire	9	8
West Mercia	15	13
West Midlands	74	72
West Yorkshire	98	85
Wiltshire	7	5

Vehicle Confiscations

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vehicles have been confiscated as a result of antisocial behaviour in *(a)* Leeds and *(b)* Leeds West since police were given powers to do so. [1727]

Hazel Blears: A power to seize vehicles being used anti-socially arises only when they are being driven off-road without authority or on-road carelessly or inconsiderately and in such a way as to cause alarm, distress or annoyance. Statistics on the number of vehicles seized under this provision in Leeds and Leeds West are not readily available.

HEALTH

Abortions

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made with the investigation instigated by her predecessor into the facilitation by the British Pregnancy Advisory Service of terminations in Spain of pregnancies of more than 24 weeks' gestation. [1150]

Caroline Flint: The report was commissioned to the Chief Medical Officer by the previous Secretary of State. Decisions will be taken on the publication of the report once the Secretary of State has considered the CMO's conclusions and recommendations. It would be inappropriate to comment any further at this stage.

Antibiotics

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the Government will make all bacterial diseases that are resistant to all antibiotics reportable; and what steps the Government are taking to deal with the development of resistance to antibiotics in infections. [890]

Caroline Flint: There are no plans to make all bacterial diseases resistant to antibiotics notifiable as the Health Protection Agency already operates reporting systems.

The Government produced the UK "Antimicrobial Strategy and Action Plan" in June 2000. The strategy identifies three key elements in controlling antimicrobial resistance, surveillance, to provide an information base for action; prudent antimicrobial use, to limit unnecessary pressure for the emergence of resistance; and infection control, to limit the spread of infection in general, and thus some of the need for antimicrobial agents.

We have built on this by establishing the specialist advisory committee on antimicrobial resistance (SACAR) in 2001 to provide scientific advice. SACAR has an active work programme that is taken forward by a number of sub-groups. Another relevant initiative is the £12 million we are providing over three years to help hospital clinical pharmacists monitor the use of antibiotics.

Breastfeeding

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will introduce a national strategy for supporting breastfeeding. [1254]

Caroline Flint: The Government do not have any plans to introduce a specific national strategy for supporting breastfeeding. However, the national health service priorities and planning framework and associated NHS local delivery plan lines already require the NHS to increase breastfeeding initiation rates by two percentage points per year for the period 2003–06 and 2005–08. Also, the public service agreement target to reduce health inequalities by 2010 has breastfeeding as an indicator for infant mortality.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the merits of introducing legislation in England similar to the new law in Scotland outlawing discrimination against women breastfeeding in places to which members of the public have access. [1317]

Caroline Flint: The Government are fully committed to the promotion of breastfeeding and have a range of ongoing activities to increase support for breastfeeding. The Department is conducting the next National Infant Feeding Survey this year. Within this, we will be seeking women's views on breastfeeding in public places and we will consider the findings from this survey in light of the Scottish Bill.

Childhood Cancer

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the Draper report on childhood cancer and electromagnetic field exposures from power lines to be published; what assessment she has made of the data on which the findings are based; and if she will make a statement. [2017]

Caroline Flint: A study of childhood cancer in relation to distance from high voltage power lines in England and Wales was published in the *British Medical Journal* on 4 June. The work was led by Dr. Draper at the Oxford childhood cancer research group and was funded under the Department's radiation protection research programme. The results found an association between an increased incidence of leukaemia for children whose home address at birth was near power lines. There was no association for other childhood cancers. Magnetic field exposures were not included in the publication, but will be included in the next phase of the study. A response statement has been posted on the Health Protection Agency (HPA) website at www.hpa.org.uk/radiation.

There have been a number of population studies in the past that have linked magnetic field exposure with a raised incidence of childhood leukaemia. This has led to the International Agency for Cancer Research to classify extremely low frequency fields as a "possible carcinogen". The World Health Organization and the HPA in this country have recommended additional research and the need for further precautionary measures to be considered. Government officials have already started detailed discussions with industry, regulators, professional bodies and interest groups about how to respond and a stakeholder group has been set up with the intention of making recommendations in the interests of society as a whole.

Drug Overdoses

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to reduce the number of deaths caused by overdose of illegal drugs. [1053]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* Since the publication of the action plan to reduce drug-related deaths in November 2001, the Department together with the National Treatment Agency has taken steps to prevent or reduce deaths related to overdose of drugs controlled through the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. These steps include improved surveillance and monitoring; promotion of more consistency in prescribing practice; and issuing guidance to treatment commissioners and providers and to users on limiting the risks of overdose.

Between 1999 and 2003, the most recent years for which figures are available, deaths related to overdose of controlled drugs have reduced by 14 per cent.

EU Regulation (Nutrition and Health Claims)

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the effect on industry of the proposal for a regulation on nutrition and health claims made on foods (2003/0165 COM); and if she will make a statement. [984]

Caroline Flint: A supplementary explanatory memorandum 11646/03 was lodged in the Library in March 2004 covering a regulatory impact assessment (RIA). The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has worked together with the Small Business Service and the Cabinet Office regulatory impact unit to ensure as full an assessment as possible is made.

The RIA has since been revised to reflect changes to the text of the proposal following negotiation. These have included lengthening the transitional periods, removing proposed bans on types of health claim and clarifying the ways in which health claims would be authorised. The areas where industry may be subject to additional costs are re-labelling, possible reformulation, scientific substantiation of the effect claimed, and where the loss of a claim makes it uneconomic to market the product.

The FSA estimates that where nutrition or health claims underpin marketing of products the food industry and food supplements industry might face costs ranging from zero to £5 million as a result of this European Union proposal.

Food Labelling/Supplements

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action she is taking *(a)* in the EU and *(b)* within England to improve standards of food labelling. [1320]

Caroline Flint: The Government have and will continue to contribute actively to the European Commission's current comprehensive reviews of both the food labelling Directive 2000/13/EC and the nutrition labelling Directive 90/46/EC. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) will be consulting fully on any proposals received. Rules on the labelling of food allergens and improved ingredient listing come into force later this year.

In addition to the legal requirements, the FSA has issued best practice guidance on food labelling practice, some of which is being reviewed, and further guidance is in preparation. The FSA is also currently working with stakeholders to develop a system of front-of-pack signposting that will help consumers make healthier choices by providing at-a-glance information on the nutritional content of the food.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when Ministers next plan to meet representatives of Consumers for Health Choice, the Health Food Manufacturers' Association and the National Association of Health Stores to discuss her strategy for achieving her objectives in relation to the regulation of vitamin and mineral supplements; [1535]

(2) what assessment she has made of the implications for the attainment of her objectives in relation to the regulation of food supplements of the decision of the member companies of the Council for Responsible Nutrition to reformulate their products to remove in advance of the July deadline those safe ingredients which are not permitted under the terms of the Food Supplements (England) Regulations 2003; [1536]

(3) if she will make a statement on progress in her efforts to find solutions to the practical problems associated with the implementation of the Food Supplements Directive; [1539]

(4) how the Food Standards Agency plans to influence the response of the European Commission to the forthcoming ruling of the European Court of Justice in relation to the Food Supplements Directive; [1540]

(5) how she plans to use the United Kingdom presidency of the European Union to influence Commission actions on food supplements legislation following the ruling of the European Court of Justice in relation to the Food Supplements Directive in July; [1541]

(6) what guidance she has given the Food Standards Agency concerning its plans to influence the response of the European Commission once the European Court of Justice delivers its ruling in July in relation to the legality of the Food Supplements Directive. [1542]

Caroline Flint: Ministers have regularly met with food supplement industry representatives and other groups, including Consumers for Health Choice, to discuss the Food Supplements Directive and to maintain an open dialogue. This dialogue should be continued following the ruling of the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The Government's objective is to ensure the protection of consumer health.

The decision by member companies of the Council for Responsible Nutrition to reformulate their products is a commercial one and is made on a company by company basis. It is not appropriate for Ministers to assess such commercial decisions. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has made it clear that it will give derogation to any substance where a dossier has been submitted; this applies to the 28 dossiers received to date. The FSA has offered to provide additional resource so that as many dossiers as possible are developed before 12 July 2005 to maintain consumer choice.

The United Kingdom presidency will take forward the inherited Council agenda. Work undertaken on food supplements will depend on the outcome of the ruling of the ECJ.

The FSA has sought clarification from the Commission on its advice following the publication of the opinion of the Advocate General. The Commission advised that no action can be taken until the ECJ issues its ruling. The FSA will then decide on its course of action, as an independent Government Department which advises Ministers. Further discussions will take place at this stage.

Genetically Modified Food/Materials

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has commissioned on the effects of genetically modified food on human health in each of the past eight years for which records are available. [2012]

Caroline Flint: In the European Union, all genetically modified (GM) foods are subject to a mandatory pre-market safety assessment before they can be permitted to enter the food chain. This assessment is carried out on a case by case basis and provides assurance that any approved GM food is as safe as its non-GM conventional counterpart. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) funds a large body of research to support the safety assessment of GM foods, but has not commissioned any specific research in the area mentioned above. Information on research carried out by the FSA can be found on its website at: www.food.gov.uk/science/research/

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department *(a)* is undertaking and *(b)* has commissioned into whether the DNA of genetically modified materials is being transferred into the human gut. [1324]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published research on human volunteers that examined the potential for horizontal gene transfer from genetically modified food to gut bacteria. No intact DNA was shown to be transferred to bacteria in the intestinal tract. A number of other studies on horizontal gene transfer have also been commissioned by the FSA. These have been published on the FSA website at www.food.gov.uk/ and in peer reviewed journals. No further FSA-funded research is currently under way in this area.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the potential for transfer of genetically modified DNA from food products to human gut bacteria. [1483]

Caroline Flint: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew) earlier today.

Health Finance (Dorset)

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the estimated financial outcome in the 2005–06 financial year is for *(a)* Poole Primary Care Trust, *(b)* Bournemouth Primary Care Trust and *(c)* the South East Dorset Primary Care Trust. [1468]

Caroline Flint: The financial plans for 2005–06 have not yet been finalised, but primary care trusts are expected to plan to live within their revenue resource, capital resource and cash limits each and every year.

Hospitals (Shropshire)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time equivalent temporary staff have been employed at *(a)* the RJ and AH Orthopaedic Hospital Gobowen, *(b)* the Royal Hospital, Shrewsbury and *(c)* the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford in each of the last five years. [2234]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the format requested. The table does not show the number of non-medical locum and temporary staff, since this information is not collected centrally.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS) staff locum doctors1 for specified organisations

Number (headcount)

				March		
		1996	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2004*
RKF	Princess Royal Hospital National Health Service Trust	4	0	0	0	0
RLZ	Royal Shrewsbury Hospitals NHS Trust	5	6	1	0	0
RXW	Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust	0	0	0	2	4
ME2	Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust	0	0	0	0	0

[1] Excludes staff, who hold a substantive contract.

Note:

Data as at 30 September every year except 31 March 2004.

Source:

NHS health and social care information centre Medical and Dental Workforce Census

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff at *(a)* the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, *(b)* the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford and *(c)* the RJ and AH Orthopaedic Hospital, Gobowen have been dedicated to the treatment of MRSA in each of the last five years. [2240]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the budget of the RJ and AH Orthopaedic Hospital, Gobowen has been dedicated to the treatment of MRSA in each of the last five years. [2241]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the budget of the *(a)* Princess Royal Hospital, Telford and *(b)* Royal Shrewsbury Hospital has been dedicated to the treatment of MRSA in each of the last five years. [2246]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Hysterosalpingo-contrast-sonography

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of waiting times for hysterosalpingo-contrast-sonography; and if she will make a statement. [263]

Caroline Flint: Information on waiting times for hysterosalpingo-contrast-sonography is not held centrally. This is a matter for local determination. The guideline produced by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence on the assessment and treatment for people with fertility problems advises that in certain cases a hysterosalpingogram (an X-ray) should be offered to examine fallopian tubes, and that where appropriate expertise is available, screening using hysterosalpingo-contrast-ultrasononography (a scan) should be considered as an effective alternative.

Illegal Meats

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government are taking to combat the use of illegal meats in restaurants. [2221]

Caroline Flint: The responsibility of enforcement in premises such as restaurants rests with local authorities. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) works closely with the United Kingdom's local authorities and also with other Government Departments and agencies, by sharing information and developing strategies for tackling all meat fraud more effectively.

The FSA has introduced a number of measures to help local authorities, such as the issuing last year of comprehensive guidance to help local authorities investigating illegal meat crimes. In addition, the FSA has established a 'fighting fund' that local authorities can apply to for financial assistance when investigating meat crimes.

The FSA has also created a UK-wide illegal meat taskforce, which is comprised of 24 enforcement officers specially trained by the FSA in advanced investigation skills and relevant legislation. Members are drawn from local authorities regionally spread across the UK. They are available to assist other enforcers investigating illegal meat.

The FSA has established the meat fraud and diversity branch within its enforcement division, which provides technical advice and guidance directly to local authorities on relevant enforcement issues. In line with the requirements of the FSA's new strategic plan, the branch is also currently establishing a food fraud database, which will further enhance local authorities' abilities to carry out effective investigations into the trade in illegal meat.

Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what additional resources will be made available to NHS bodies in the event of an outbreak of pandemic influenza. [267]

Caroline Flint: Planning for emergencies is a core task for national health service bodies. The Government are purchasing 14.6 million courses of antivirals to support the NHS response. The Department has published operational guidance for the NHS entitled "Influenza Pandemic Contingency Planning: Operational guidance for health service planners" to help NHS organisations with their plans, and has tasked the Health Protection Agency to produce infection control guidance and clinical management protocols, which will help the NHS in planning effectively.

IVF

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the success rate of births using IVF has been in each year since 1997. [2199]

Caroline Flint: The live birth rate per treatment cycle started, for the United Kingdom, is shown in the table:

In vitro fertilisation (IVF): Live birth rates per treatment cycle started 1997

	Live birth rate (percentage)		
	Fresh embryo transfers	Frozen embryo transfers	Fresh/Frozen embryo transfers
1997–98	—	—	[1]16.41
1998–99	—	—	[1]18.21
1999–2000	—	—	[1]20.71
2000–01	—	—	[1]21.81
2001–02[2]	—	—	—
2002–03[3,4]			
under 35	27.6	15.4	—
35–37	22.3	15.5	—
38–39	18.3	14.0	—
40–42	10.0	10.7	—

[1] Figures are for patients of all ages using fresh and frozen embryo transfer.

[2] No figures published for 2001–02.

[3] No "all ages" figures published. Live birth rates published by age band and embryo type for IVF patients using own eggs.

[4] The most recent year for which information is available.

Source:

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority annual reports and patient guide.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Government have spent on the provision of IVF treatment in each year since 1997. [2218]

Caroline Flint: It is for primary care trusts to determine how to use the funding allocated to them to commission services to meet the healthcare needs of the local population, including fertility services. Information on expenditure on in vitro fertilisation is not collected centrally.

Mobile Telephones

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has examined on whether there is a link between keeping a working mobile phone in a breast pocket and cardiac rhythm dysfunction; and if she will make a statement. [1614]

Caroline Flint: Only a few scientific studies have investigated if the signals from mobile phones can have a detrimental effect on the heart and I am advised that these have not found any consistent effects on cardiac function or blood pressure. The United Kingdom mobile telecommunications and health research (MTHR) programme, jointly funded by Government and industry, is currently supporting a large, well conducted study investigating the effects of mobile phones on blood pressure and cardiac function in healthy people. The results are expected to be published in 2006. Descriptions of all the studies supported under this research programme are on the MTHR website at www.mthr.org.uk.

Research on exposure to radiofrequency (RF) fields was comprehensively reviewed in 2003 by the independent Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation (AGNIR) in "Health Effects from Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields" [Documents of the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB), Vol. 14, No 2]. AGNIR concluded that:

> "The weight of evidence now available does not suggest that there are adverse health effects from exposures to RF fields below guideline levels, but the published research on RF exposures and health has limitations, and mobile phones have only been in widespread use for a relatively short time".

This information is available on the Health Protection Agency (HPA) website at www.hpa.org.uk/radiation. AGNIR advises the HPA's radiation protection division, formerly the NRPB, which keeps the worldwide research findings under surveillance.

Pharmacists

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice she plans to give to primary care trusts on the commissioning of services from pharmacists to secure a common protocol to be followed. [2077]

Jane Kennedy: The new community pharmacy contractual framework (CPCF) went live from 1 April. Contractors should ensure by 1 October they meet the requirements for the provision of essential services. Where a pharmacy proposes to provide advanced services, it must also meet the necessary accreditation requirements. Guidance for primary care trusts (PCTs) and contractors about the new CPCF is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4109256&chk=/hpbTh.

Further guidance on commissioning local enhanced services will be available to PCTs and contractors as soon as possible.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she plans to take to ensure that patients may choose the pharmacy nominated to receive the electronic transfers of their prescriptions. [2091]

Jane Kennedy: The electronic transmission of prescriptions (ETP) service being developed by the National Health Service Connecting for Health will allow patients to nominate where they would like their prescription to be dispensed. They will be able to ask their general practitioner's surgery or a pharmacy to log their chosen dispenser with the ETP service. If asked to recommend a dispenser, a prescriber will need to provide a list of dispensers who operate the ETP service, as provided by the primary care trust. In time, it is expected that patients will also be able to log their nomination online, via HealthSpace.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in meeting the public service agreement target to increase in each year the proportion of drug users successfully sustaining or completing treatment programmes. [1560]

Caroline Flint: The Department is currently on track to meet its target to increase each year the proportion of drug users successfully sustaining or completing treatment programmes.

It is estimated that the total number of individuals successfully completing or being retained in treatment in 2003–04 was 90,511.

This is an increase from the 80,600 problem drug misusers who successfully completed or were retained in treatment in 2002–03, the first year for which these figures were available.

Smoking

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment the Government have made of the impact of smoking in the workplace on *(a)* individuals and *(b)* the NHS; [47]

(2) what steps the Government are taking to encourage smoke-free working environments. [48]

Caroline Flint: The most recent estimate of the number of workplace deaths caused by second-hand smoke was published in the *British Medical Journal* on 2 March 2005 in a report by Professor Konrad Jamrozik. This gave an estimate of 617 deaths a year in the United Kingdom. The author acknowledges that the results are "distinctly sensitive" to some of the underlying assumptions. A copy of the paper is available in the Library.

The cost to the national health service of treating illness and disease caused by smoking is between £1.4 billion and £1.7 billion a year.

In the Queen's speech, the Department has set out plans for legislation to make the vast majority of enclosed public places and workplaces smoke-free within the next four years.

A partial impact regulatory assessment (RIA) has been published alongside the Choosing Health White Paper, which gives initial estimates of the possible impact on smoking prevalence. This estimates that the proposal outlined in the White Paper might reduce smoking rates by between 0.7 and 1.7 percentage points. The RIA contains estimates of costs and benefits of a ban on smoking in the workplace. A copy is available in the Library.

Surplus Sites

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list those sites in England and Wales, within her responsibility, which have been identified as surplus to requirements; what plans have been identified as their possible future use; what consultative process will be followed in each case; and if she will make a statement. [2058]

Jane Kennedy: The list shows the larger sites that are surplus to the requirements of the national health service in England and in the ownership of Secretary of State for Health.

The list includes 22 sites that are due to transfer to English Partnerships (EP) as part of a wider agreement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and in support of the Government's sustainable communities plan. 67 surplus NHS sites have already been transferred to EP this year, as part of the same programme. It will be for EP to decide how to take forward all these sites subject to the normal planning process.

The list also includes other larger sites which are surplus to the requirements of the NHS but which are not being transferred to EP. Arrangements for the disposal of these sites are at various stages and it is not clear in every case exactly what the future use will be. It is likely that most will be redeveloped for residential purposes; the manner of development will be the subject of local consultation and the planning process.

Turner Village, Colchester[1]
St. Margaret's Hospital, Epping[1]
Runwell Hospital, Wickford[1]
Part Harperbury Hospital, Radlett, Herts
Part Little Plumpstead Hospital, Nr Norwich
Part Cane Hill, Coulsdon[1]
Part Napsbury Hospital, Herts
St. Leonard's, Ringwood[1]
Standish Hospital, Stroud
Okehampton Castle Hospital, Okehampton
Part Countess of Chester, Chester[1]
Northern View, Bradford
Sedgefield Hospital, Sedgefield
St. Mary's, Stannington
Homelands Hospital, Crook[1]
Part Hartlepool General Hospital, Hartlepool[1]
Part St. George's Hospital, Morpeth[1]
Part Prudhoe Hospital, Prudhoe[1]
Part Cherry Knowle, Sunderland[1]
Part Wharfedale Hospital, Otley[1]
Part Grimsby District General Hospital, Grimsby[1]
Middleton Hospital, Ilkley
Graylingwell, Chichester[1]
Stone House, Dartford[1]
Part St. Ebbas, Epsom[1]
Part West Park Hospital, Epsom[1]
Part Southlands Hospital, Shoreham[1]
Land at Gordon Barracks, Gillingham
Land at Forest Lodge, St. James Hospital, Portsmouth
Eastry Hospital, Kent
Hollywood Lodge, Epsom
Part Manor/Kingsway Hospital, Derby[1]
Part Towers Hospital, Leicester[1]
Land at Towers Hospital, Leicester
Royal Shrewsbury, South[1]
The Beeches Hospital, Telford[1]
Lake View Close, St. Margaret's Hospital site, Great Barr, Birmingham
Land at Alexandra Hospital, Redditch

[1] Denotes sites that will transfer to English Partnerships

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Postal Voting

20. **Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make it her policy to end postal voting on demand. [1908]

Ms Harman: It is not the Government's policy to end postal voting on demand but it is our policy to tighten the security of postal voting.

23. **Mr. Francois:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what her policy is on all-postal vote elections. [1912]

Ms Harman: In relation to postal voting we have no plans to change the provisions of the Representation of the People Act 2000 which requires the Secretary of State to consider any application to pilot all postal voting.

24. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what *(a)* the earliest and *(b)* the latest date was on which returning officers were able to dispatch postal votes to voters during the recent general election. [1913]

Ms Harman: In the general election last month, the earliest date on which postal votes could be dispatched to voters was 19 April. They cannot be printed or dispatched until close of nominations and the latest date they could be dispatched was 4 May—for replacements where the original had gone astray.

House of Lords

21. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on House of Lords reform. [1910]

Ms Harman: We intend to continue with reform of the House of Lords to create an effective legitimate chamber while maintaining the primacy of this House.

Voter Registration

22. **Mr. Hunt:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what her policy is on individual voter registration. [1911]

Ms Harman: We want to ensure that we have electoral registers which are comprehensive and secure. We are proposing that to be included on the register an individual should give a signature and date of birth. We currently propose to stick with one form per household.

25. **Ms Keeley:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate she has made of the level of voter registration for the recent general election. [1914]

Ms Harman: The number of UK registered electors at the general election was 44,261,545. This figure excludes the registered electors of the Staffordshire South constituency who numbered 69,604 as at 26 May 2005.

Our estimate based on departmental research is that 93 per cent. of those are eligible to vote.

Claims Farming

26. **Linda Gilroy:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures she plans to take to discourage the practice of claims farming. [1915]

Bridget Prentice: We plan to bring forward legislation in the Compensation Bill to regulate claims farmers to ensure that consumer safeguards are improved and abuses are dealt with.

Legal Aid

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the adequacy of funding for civil legal aid. [1768]

Bridget Prentice: The Government and the Legal Services Commission are working to ensure that the civil legal aid spend is better targeted at protecting the vulnerable, especially children at risk and the socially excluded. The Fundamental Legal Aid Review (FLAR), launched in May 2004, has been examining how legal aid can provide services that meet the needs of society, help people improve their lives and prevent social exclusion.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Legal Services Commission intends to carry out a pilot test of its consultation proposals regarding the introduction of price competitive tendering to the criminal legal aid system. [1797]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Service Commission (LSC) is currently analysing responses to its consultation exercise on proposals to introduce price competitive tendering (PCT) for publicly funded criminal defence services in London. A final decision on the most suitable way forward, including whether a pilot scheme might be appropriate, will be made in the light of the comments received. However, the LSC considers that the market in London, with almost 500 solicitors' firms contracted to provide criminal legal aid services would be well suited to PCT, and would also be consistent with its statutory obligation to optimise value for money.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans the Department has to extend the introduction of price competitive tendering to the criminal legal aid system in parts of England and Wales outside London. [1800]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission and the Department for Constitutional Affairs will continue to seek to improve the way in which these services are purchased to assure quality for clients and achieve better value for money. This may include a greater use of managed competition. The current consultation on the proposed system for London will help inform this process.

Mr. Pope: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much funding for legal aid the Department and its predecessor provided in each year since 1997. [1980]

Bridget Prentice: The total amount of funding provided for legal aid each year is as follows:

	£ million
2004–05	2,053
2003–04	2,084
2002–03	1,913
2001–02	1,719
2000–01	1,666
1999–2000	1,556
1998–99	1,623
1997–98	1,527

Asylum/Work Permits

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to prevent legal advisers facilitating unfounded claims for *(a)* asylum and *(b)* applications for work permits. [1860]

Bridget Prentice: The Government take the matter very seriously. The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) and the Law Society, which regulate immigration advisers, have a duty to ensure that advisers act properly.

Since becoming fully operational in May 2001, the OISC has used its powers to prosecute advisers, refuse applications for registration and to withdraw regulation from advisers.

The Law Society has put in place a raft of measures to ensure that immigration advisers are acting properly, ranging from investigations to referral to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal.

The Legal Services Commission has taken a number of steps to ensure that only suppliers meeting rigorous quality standards can provide publicly funded advice.

Census Returns

Lorely Burt: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs under what arrangements *(a)* the College of Arms and *(b)* other applicants receive copies of personal information from closed decennial census returns; and if she will take steps to extend those arrangements to allow personal information to be exceptionally released from the 1911 and 1921 censuses for Ordsall Hall, Retford, Nottinghamshire. [1844]

Ms Harman: The 1911 census returns are in the custody of the National Archives, and requests for information contained in them are considered on a case by case basis under the Freedom of Information Act, in consultation with the Office for National Statistics as the transferring department. So far it has not been possible to make any returns from the 1911 census available, including the one referred to by the hon. Member, because they are covered by the S.41 exemption of the Act relating to breach of confidence.

Census returns from 1921 onwards were taken under the provisions of the Census Act 1920 and are in the custody of the Registrar-General for England and Wales. The 1920 Act prohibits the release of personal information by the Registrar-General without lawful authority. In consequence, they are covered by S.44 of the FOI Act relating to information prohibited from disclosure by or under any enactment. No returns from the 1921 census have been made available under the Freedom of Information Act.

Lorely Burt: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on *(a)* 100-year decennial census closure and *(b)* the Public Records Act instrument no. 12 (1966); and what the basis is for the Government's policy that the 1911 and 1921 census returns for Ordsall Hall, Retford, Nottinghamshire shall continue to be closed to inspection for 100 years. [1845]

Ms Harman: The reasons behind the Government's policy of releasing decennial census returns after a period of 100 years were most recently set out by the Constitutional Affairs Minister on 29 March 2004. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, extended closure instrument no. 12 of 1966 ceases to apply. In accordance with the Act and with Government policy, the National Archives considers each request for access to the 1911 returns on a case by case basis, in consultation with the Office for National Statistics as the transferring department. So far it has not been possible to grant any of these requests, including the one referred to by the hon. Member, because they are covered by s.41 exemption of the Act relating to breach of confidence.

Census returns from 1921 onwards were taken under the provisions of the Census Act 1920 and are in the custody of the Registrar-General for England and Wales. The 1920 Act prohibits the release of personal information by the Registrar-General without lawful authority. In consequence, they are covered by s.44 of the FOI Act relating to information prohibited from disclosure by or under any enactment.

Lorely Burt: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the UK courts have tested Government policy on withholding personal information from the decennial censuses from being inspected before the records are 100 years old. [1846]

Ms Harman: The Government's policy of releasing individual census returns after a period of 100 years has not been tested in the UK courts.

Crown Court Trials

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on her plans to reform the length and cost of trials in Crown courts. [1764]

Ms Harman: Steps are being taken by my Department to address lengthy trials. A protocol for dealing with such trials was recently issued by the Lord Chief Justice.

My Department is also considering reform of the legal aid system to ensure that the provision of legal aid is placed on a sustainable footing, while ensuring that publicly-funded legal services are available for those who need them. We intend to publish proposals before the recess, including proposals that will help reduce the length and cost of criminal cases.

Electoral Fraud

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people in each year since 1995 have been *(a)* charged and *(b)* convicted of certifying in the electoral registration form that individuals were living at an address when they were not. [655]

Ms Harman: Local Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) are responsible for compiling the electoral register for their registration area, and electoral law provides that an ERO may require persons to give information required for the purposes of that officer's duties in maintaining electoral registers. It is an offence for any person to give false information in response to such a request. Figures are not collected centrally in respect of prosecutions arising from this provision.

EU Constitution (EU Funding)

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Government have requested limits on the *(a)* spending and *(b)* activities of institutions of the European Union (i) before and (ii) during the referendum on the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe. [1217]

Ms Harman: The institutions of the European Union are responsible for their own expenditure and activities in terms of providing information to the public, though they have made clear that they will consult HMG about any public information activities in the UK. Ministers and officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are in contact with EU institutions in order to ensure clarity of and continuing respect for the role of the institutions in providing information about the EU.

Freedom of Information Act

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the operation of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 since January. [1770]

Ms Harman: The introduction of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 has begun a process of cultural change towards greater openness, transparency and accountability across central Government and the wider public sector.

Since full implementation on 1 January 2005, a huge amount of new, valuable and interesting material has been given out and thousands of information requests have been responded to.

The Freedom of Information Act has brought significant disclosures of information across the whole of the public sector and the Government are confident that an important process of cultural change has begun.

The Government will publish shortly monitoring statistics for the operation of Freedom of Information within central Government Departments during the first quarter of 2005.

Judicial Appointments

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to introduce fixed-term judicial appointments in *(a)* the Crown court and *(b)* the High Court. [1584]

Ms Harman: None.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to improve the judicial career opportunities for district judges. [1586]

Ms Harman: On 5 March the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor announced that he would be exploring the possibility of developing mentoring arrangements for salaried judges. Such a scheme would be aimed at helping those at the more junior levels of the judiciary—including District Judges—to progress to higher judicial office. My Department is now working with the judiciary to see what scheme might be appropriate. The Lord Chancellor will announce his decision in due course.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans her Department has to change the statutory eligibility requirements for judicial office. [1755]

Ms Harman: On 5 March this year the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor announced that he would review the statutory eligibility requirements for judicial appointment to see how a broader range of people with appropriate and measured experience might be made eligible. My Department is now working to identify options for change. The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor will announce his conclusions in due course.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to her answer of 24 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 86W, on judicial appointments, how many of the appointments were *(a)* women, *(b)* black and *(c)* Asian in each category. [1801]

Ms Harman: Of the 449 judicial appointments since 1 March 2005, 211 were women, 21 were black and 20 were Asian. The following table details this breakdown in each category.

Breakdown of total number of appointments by female, black and Asian

	Female	*Black*	*Asian*	*Total number of appointments*
Senior appointments	0	0	0	3
Circuit Bench appointments	1	0	0	3
District Bench and Masters appointments	1	0	0	8
Recorder appointments	3	0	1	39
Tribunal appointments	27	0	1	56
Magistrate appointments	179	21	18	340
Total	211	21	20	449

Legal Aid

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment has been made of the likely impact of proposals to introduce price competitive tendering to the criminal legal aid system on *(a)* small solicitors firms, *(b)* black and ethnic minority communities and *(c)* socially excluded and vulnerable members of the community. [1798]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) has already undertaken preliminary assessments in respect of the impact of price competitive tendering on all current suppliers in the London area, including small solicitors' firms. It has worked with suppliers and their representative bodies throughout the consultation period to enhance its understanding and has held a number of workshops which allowed suppliers to express their views and concerns directly to the LSC. This has helped to identify small firm issues that will be considered as part of the further work undertaken in the context of the final proposals following consultation.

Quality of service and access to advice are a key priority for the LSC. The Commission's view is that all clients (including BME communities and the socially excluded) receiving services following any tendering process will be assured a quality service through the application of robust quality assurance mechanisms and the use of peer review of suppliers' services.

Name Changes (Deed Poll)

John Battle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people have changed their name by deed poll in each year since 1997; what estimate she has made of the number of people who changed their name without registering the change by deed poll in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [2094]

Ms Harman: The enrolment of change of name by Deed Poll in the Supreme Court is undertaken by the Central Office in the Royal Courts of Justice under the provisions of the Enrolment of Deeds (Change of Name) Regulation 1994. The Royal Courts of Justice is part of Her Majesty's Courts Service which is an executive agency of the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

The number of people who have enrolled their change of name by Deed Poll in the Royal Courts of Justice, since 1997 are:

	Number
1997	246
1998	227
1999	210
2000	254
2001	193
2002	184
2003	209
2004	195

The enrolment of a Deed Poll provides a public record of a persons' change of name and the details of the name change are published in the London Gazette. There is no requirement to enroll a Deed Poll. There is no central register for all changes of name by Deed Poll. Only those names enrolled are recorded.

No estimates have been made as to the number of people who choose to change their name by Deed Poll, but not enroll that change.

North-East Regional Assembly Referendum

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what action the Government intend to take on recommendations made by the Electoral Commission on the conduct of the North East Regional Assembly referendum; and if she will make a statement. [2053]

Ms Harman: I understand that The Electoral Commission's report will be published in the autumn of this year. The Government will give careful consideration to any recommendations which the Commission make.

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what monitoring is carried out of the proportion of applications to admit previous sexual history in rape trials under the provision of section 41 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999, which are successful. [1579]

Ms Harman: None. The Government do not keep statistical records of applications to admit previous sexual history in rape trials under the provisions of Section 41 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. There are therefore no figures available to ascertain the proportion of successful applications. The Home Office commissioned research into the operation of defence applications of this nature, which it will publish in due course.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of rape trials were heard by recorders of the Crown Court in the last year for which figures are available. [1581]

Ms Harman: Figures relating to the proportion of rape trials heard by Recorders of the Crown Court are provided in the table.

Rape trial cases heard by Recorders

	Recorder	*Total*	*Proportion of rape trials heard by recorders (percentage)*
2002	38	1,377	2.8
2003	43	1,494	2.9
2004	42	1,531	2.7
2005	12	530	2.3

Referendums

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans the Government have to bring forward legislation to allow a recount to be held in a nationwide referendum; and if she will make a statement. [1262]

Ms Harman: Any legislative provision for recounts will be contained in an order to be made under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 setting down the rules for the conduct of referendums. The order will be subject to full parliamentary scrutiny.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will publish the guidelines to returning officers for holding recounts in parliamentary elections. [1263]

Ms Harman: The Government do not issue guidance to local authorities on factors to be taken into account before, during or after a UK parliamentary election. Guidance on the administration of elections is issued to returning officers by the Electoral Commission—

"Managing a UK parliamentary general election–a good practice guidance manual" is available on the Commission's website at: http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk/files/dms/GeguidancePartGFINAL_15842_11649_E_S_W_.pdf. Guidance on recounts can be found in Part G of this document. Other specific guidance—for instance on security issues and returning officers' expenses—is issued by my Department and is available on the departmental website.

Returning officers operate independently from both local authorities and central government. Any guidance is offered for their assistance but they are not bound either to accept or to follow it.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what restrictions there are on campaign spending by *(a)* Northern Ireland political parties and *(b)* Northern Ireland-based registered third parties in (i) UK-wide referendums and (ii) Northern Ireland-only referendums. [1264]

Ms Harman: The restrictions on campaign spending are set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). A campaigning body or individual wishing to spend more than £10,000 at a referendum held under this Act would need to register with the Electoral Commission as a "permitted participant."

The expenditure limits for a political party registered as a permitted participant in a UK-wide referendum are determined by the share of the vote that the party achieved in the most recent Westminster parliamentary general election, as set out in the table.

Percentage of the vote	*Amount*
30	£5 million
20 to 30	£4 million
10 to 20	£3 million
5 to 10	£2 million
less than 5	£500,000

A permitted participant, including a political party, is able to apply to the Electoral Commission to be the designated organisation for the outcome they are campaigning for. In this case the expenditure limit for a UK-wide referendum would be £5 million.

The expenditure limit for all other permitted participants at a UK-wide referendum, which would include Northern Ireland-based recognised third parties, would be £500,000, regardless of where the permitted participants are based.

For a Northern Ireland-only referendum the expenditure limits would be set by order by the Secretary of State, having sought the views of the Electoral Commission.

Special Advisers

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will publish the names of the special advisers employed within the Department. [93]

Ms Harman: Lord Hart of Chilton and Mr. Philip Bassett are employed by the Department for Constitutional Affairs as special advisers.

Supreme Court

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress has been made to date in establishing Middlesex Guildhall as the venue for the new Supreme Court. [1766]

Ms Harman: The Government have appointed the team to transform Middlesex Guildhall into the new UK Supreme Court. Project managers Drivers Jonas and lead architects Feilden and Mawson, supported by Foster and Partners, were selected following a competitive tender. This team are now taking forward the project to design and refurbish Middlesex Guildhall, in consultation with the Law Lords.

Terrorism Trials

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discussions Ministers have had with the Home Office regarding the future conduct of trials in terrorism cases. [1762]

Ms Harman: Department for Constitutional Affairs Ministers hold regular meetings with their Home Office colleagues where various issues are discussed including the future conduct of trials in terrorism cases.

UK Presidency (EU)

Kate Hoey: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what communication activities are planned in relation to the policy areas covered by her Department during the UK presidency of the EU; and what budget has been allocated for these activities. [1658]

Ms Harman: Communications activity for the UK presidency of the EU is being co-ordinated centrally by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

As part of this, DCA will undertake activities to ensure that information about the Department's role in taking forward the presidency programme is fully available to Parliament, practitioners and other stakeholders, and to the public.

No additional budget has been allocated within my Department.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the value of the opium crop in Afghanistan was in each of the last five years. [1866]

Dr. Howells: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducts an annual survey into the level of opium poppy cultivation and production in Afghanistan. Full details can be found on their website: http://www.unodc.org.

UNODC assess that the "Farm Gate Value" of opiates in Afghanistan in the last five years is as follows:

Farm gate value

	US$
2000	91 million
2001	56 million
2002	1.2 billion
2003	1.02 billion
2004	0.6 billion

The UK, as lead nation on counter narcotics (CN), remains committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive 2005 CN Implementation Plan and in updating their National Drug Control Strategy. I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Mr. Gibb) on 2 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 234W, on the counter narcotics programme in Afghanistan,.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much financial assistance was provided to Afghanistan in each of the last five years. [1867]

Dr. Howells: Between Financial Years (FY) 2000–01 and 2004–05, the UK provided around £570 million in development assistance to Afghanistan (including support for humanitarian assistance, security sector reform and counter-narcotics). The following table provides the yearly breakdown. We also provide about £40 million each year to Afghanistan through multilateral channels such as the United Nations and the European Union.

£ million

			Financial year		
	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Department for International Development (DFID) Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department	5	45	45	6	—
DFID Afghanistan Programme	—	—	33	75	78
Cross Whitehall Counter Narcotics Fund	—	—	—	16.6	28
Global Conflict Prevention Pool (joint DFID-Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)-Ministry of Defence)	—	—	11	10.3	16.3
FCO Global Opportunities Fund	—	—	—	—	0.7
Total	5	45	89	107.9	123

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will answer the letter to him dated 18 January 2005 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mrs. Iqbal. [2125]

Dr. Howells: I refer my right hon. Friend to the reply I gave him on 24 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 66W. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 6 April 2005.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will answer the letter to him dated 14 January 2005 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Hina Khalid. [2126]

Dr. Howells: I refer my right hon. Friend to the reply the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Mullin) gave him on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, column 1486W, and the reply I also gave him on 24 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 66W. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 1 April 2005.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will answer the letter to him dated 7 March from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mehwish Saeed. [2127]

Dr. Howells: I refer my right hon. Friend to the reply I gave him on 24 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 65W. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied to my right hon. Friend's letter with regard to Mehwish Saeed on 15 March.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will answer the letter to him dated 15 April from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mrs. S. Siddique. [2130]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied to my right hon. Friend's letter with regard to Mrs. Siddique on 6 June.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will answer the letter to him dated 7 February from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. M. R. Sufi. [2131]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend replied to my right hon. Friend's letter with regard to Mr. M.R. Sufi on 7 June.

EU Legislation

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the UK legislation that has partly or wholly implemented EU legislation in each year since 1997. [1656]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There is no central register of UK legislation wholly or partly implementing EU legislation.

EU legislation may be directly applicable, implemented by administrative means, or introduced when domestic legislation is amended for other purposes. Where EU legislation does require transposition into national law, it may be implemented either by primary legislation, or by secondary legislation under the European Communities Act 1972 (the ECA). The majority of EU legislation is enacted under section 2(2) of the ECA. House of Commons Standard Note SN/IA/2888 gives further information, including on the number of Statutory Instruments enacted under the ECA in each parliamentary session.

Transposition notes, available in the Library of the House, show how all the main elements of individual EU directives have been or will be transposed into UK law. We aim to ensure that UK implementation of EU legislation minimises administrative burdens.

EU Presidency

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the job descriptions are of the members of staff within the Presidency Unit; and what the projected staff budget for financial year 2005–06 is. [1808]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Job descriptions for members of staff in the EU Presidency Unit are:

Team Leader—To deliver the programme and organisation of the 2005 UK

Presidency of the EU;

Deputy Team Leader—Working with the Presidency Team Leader, help oversee the preparations for the 2005 UK Presidency of the EU. Input on Presidency policy priority issues. Day-to-day management of the Presidency Team. Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) lead on the organisation of the European Councils and supervision of arrangements for the Gymnich;

Head of External Communications—To co-ordinate the Presidency public diplomacy strategy, both presentation of the UK Presidency in other EU member states, and presentation of the UK Presidency within the UK. To oversee issues related to the Presidency Website;

Desk Officer—To be the Presidency Team focal point on third country issues/summits/meetings. To schedule all third country meetings during the Presidency;

Resource Management Officer—To advise the Presidency Team on policy and procedures for UK resource related issues. Primary point of contact for the Team on FCO's policy on resource issues. Responsible for correct disbursement of the Presidency budget and post-Presidency budgetary report;

Desk Officer—To set up, clear, maintain and publish the Presidency calendar of events. To lead on the organisation of the Commission visit within the Presidency Unit. Logo Branded items;

Desk Officer—To provide the Team lead on the Gymnich meeting during the UK Presidency (including on agenda issues) and support the Deputy Head of Team on European Councils. Support also on third country issues and other Presidency events. Logo branded Stationery;

Website Manager—Responsible for the delivery and operational management of the UK EU Presidency Website;

Website Editor x 2—Responsible for servicing the content for the Website and updating it throughout the Presidency;

Support staff x 1—To provide administrative support to Desk Officers, Head, Deputy Head and Unit RMO;

Support Staff x 1—To provide administrative support to the EU Presidency Team.

A budget of £741,415 has been allocated to cover the costs of additional staff requirements in Brussels for 2005–06. Staffing of the Presidency unit is being met through re-prioritisation of existing FCO resources and is costed at £400,303 for 2005–06.

European Council

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what decisions the European Council has taken by *(a)* vote, *(b)* majority vote and *(c)* qualified majority vote in each of the last 10 years. [1652]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The European Council, composed of Heads of State or Government, generally acts by consensus rather than by voting. The Council of Ministers, by contrast, takes decisions by simple majority, qualified majority or unanimity voting, in accordance with its legal framework. Since January 2001, details of voting in the Council of Ministers have been published by the Council Secretariat in its monthly summaries of Council acts. These can be accessed on the Council's internet site at http://ue.eu.int/cms3_applications/showPage.ASP?id = 551&lang = en&mode = g

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of documents in the register of the European Council is fully accessible to the public. [1650]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The European Council as such has no such register of documents. Regulation No. 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 requires the Community institutions to make available an electronic document register. One of these is held by the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. The Council Secretariat has informed us that as at 21 February 2005, 61.6 per cent. of all registered documents were fully accessible to the public.

Israel

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who the UK representatives at the meeting of the EU-Israel Association Committee on 14 April were; and what the official position of each is. [1793]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials, led by the Deputy Head of Mission of the British embassy in Tel Aviv, represented the UK.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals were agreed at the meeting on 14 April for sub-committees under the EU-Israel Association Agreement; and what arrangements have been made for monitoring human rights issues. [1794]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: No final agreements have been reached yet. We will submit any formal proposals to Parliament for scrutiny.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the organisations and individuals who presented evidence to the EU-Israel Association Committee on 14 April on human rights within Israel and the Occupied Territories. [1795]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The EU Presidency and the European Commission, including the Middle East Director from the Foreign Relations Directorate General, jointly led the EU Delegation. Representatives from the Council Secretariat and member states also attended. The Director General for Europe from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs led the Israeli Delegation.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make available to Parliament the formal proposals on sub-committees of the EU-Israel Association Committee before they are submitted to the Council of Ministers for adoption. [1796]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The proposals will be scrutinised by the House of Commons and House of Lords European Union Committee before they are submitted to the Council of Ministers for adoption.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects the formal proposals on sub-committees of the EU-Israel Association Committee to be decided by the Council. [1996]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We expect the formal proposals on sub-committees to be decided before the end of June.

Kosovo

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the views the United Kingdom will advance at the forthcoming United Nations conference on the future status of Kosovo. [1236]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 6 June 2005]*: There are no plans for a forthcoming United Nations conference on Kosovo.

Sudan

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence on the situation in Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [1868]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friends the Foreign Secretary and Secretary of State for Defence discussed the provision of NATO and EU support to the African Union (AU) mission in Darfur, ahead of the 26 May AU donor conference, in the margins of the 23 May General Affairs and External Relations Council. Our joint FCO-DFID Sudan Unit holds regular discussions on Darfur with the Ministry of Defence and other Whitehall Departments.

We remain gravely concerned about the situation in Darfur. While direct clashes between the Government and the rebel groups have lessened in recent months, banditry and general insecurity continue to hamper the delivery of humanitarian assistance. We fully support the AU mission in Darfur and announced a further contribution of £6.6 million at a donors' conference in Addis Ababa on 26 May, bringing our total contribution to that mission to over £20 million. In addition, we have contributed £73.7 million since September 2003 to humanitarian relief in Darfur. We welcome the announcement that peace talks between the Government of Sudan and the Darfur rebel groups will reconvene in Abuja on 10 June. A UK representative will attend and offer support to the African Union mediators.

United States

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions the Government have had with the US Administration with regard to the proposed national security directive on space; and if he will make a statement. [946]

Mr. Straw: We have had no discussions with the US Administration on the proposed national security directive on space

Visas

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what stage the initial appeal against refusal for a settlement visa for Kean Antonio Robert Andrews, reference KGN 83103 has reached; and if he will make a statement. [2073]

Dr. Howells: UKvisas, the Department responsible for entry clearance matters arising overseas, sent a letter on this matter to my hon. Friend on 1 June 2005, in line with UKvisas' target response times.

Western Sahara

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans there are for a referendum to be held on the future of the Western Sahara; and if he will make a statement. [2145]

Dr. Howells: The United Kingdom fully supports the efforts of the UN Secretary-General to find a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the Western Sahara dispute which provides the people of the Western Sahara with an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination.

We believe UN efforts to find a solution to the dispute should be maintained and continue to urge all parties to the dispute to engage constructively with the UN. There are no plans for a UN referendum to be held in the near future.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 8 June 2005

PRIME MINISTER

EU Constitution

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Prime Minister if he will undertake to hold a referendum in the UK on UK accession to the treaty establishing a constitution for the European Union if the French vote no in their referendum. [2187]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the statement my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave on 6 June 2005, *Official Report,* columns 991–92.

TRANSPORT

New Cars (Emissions)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average emission of a new car, in grammes of carbon dioxide per kilometre, has been in each year since 1985. [1489]

Dr. Ladyman: Data for the period 1985–94 is not available. Data for 1995 onwards, is shown in the table. The data for 1995 and 1996 comes from the European Commission, that for 1997 to 2002 from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders Ltd (SMMT) and for 2003 and 2004 from UK Government data obtained by the DVLA.

	Average new car CO2 (g/km)
1995	191.7
1996	190.4
1997	189.8
1998	188.4
1999	185.0
2000	181.0
2001	177.6
2002	174.2
2003	172.7
2004	171.4

UK Presidency (EU)

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what communication activities are planned in relation to the policy areas covered by his Department during the UK presidency of the EU; and what budget has been allocated for these activities. [1661]

Dr. Ladyman: External communications activity for the presidency is being co-ordinated centrally by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

We are currently finalising communication activities to take place around our presidency programme. We expect any costs to be met from within existing resources.

Public Transport

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many passenger miles were travelled on *(a)* buses and *(b)* lightrail in each transport authority in England in each year since 1996. [1813]

Ms Buck: The data for London buses and for light rail systems are given in the table. Estimates of bus passenger miles are not collected for transport authorities outside London.

Million passenger miles

	1996–97	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Bus								
Greater London	2,584	2,703	2,681	2,752	2,926	3,186	3,563	3,996
Light Rail								
Tyne and Wear	158	155	148	143	142	148	171	176
South Yorkshire	18	21	22	23	24	24	25	26
Nottingham UA[1]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Blackpool UA[2]	—	—	—	8	8	9	9	7
Gtr Manchester	53	55	73	78	95	100	104	105
West Midlands[3]	—	—	—	31	35	31	31	33
Greater London	53	64	90	107	184	190	206	212

[1] Opened March 2004

[2] Data unavailable before 1999

[3] Opened May 1999

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

11. **Derek Wyatt:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the provision of key worker housing and affordable homes. [1973]

Yvette Cooper: The Government wants to offer everyone the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford. Further details are laid out in "Homes for All", copies of which can be found in the Library of the House.

Government funding, and innovative work with banks and building societies, will contribute to help as many as 110,000 first time buyers and key workers into affordable home ownership by 2010.

12. **Mike Gapes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his plans to increase availability of affordable homes in Greater London. [1974]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have allocated nearly £1.5 billion on the provision of affordable housing in London through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme in 2004–05 and 2005–06 to provide over 21,000 affordable homes.

In addition English Partnerships is expected to deliver about 4,500 homes through the pilot phase of its London Wide Initiative over the next five years of which around 2,000 will be affordable homes for sale to key workers and first time buyers.

15. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the merits of turning unused space over shops into flats. [1977]

Yvette Cooper: This is a potentially useful source of additional housing units, which can also help in reviving town centre living. There are however a number of barriers preventing much of this potential from being realised, including the complex ownership patterns in high street property. We are considering a number of ways in which these barriers might be overcome, and we will announce how we intend to take this forward in due course.

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many social homes have achieved the decent homes standard; and whether he expects the Government to meet their target of ensuring that all homes meet the standard by 2010. [1976]

Yvette Cooper: Since 1997 we have reduced the number of social homes that do not meet the decent homes standard by over a million. Schemes that have been approved or are already under way are set to deliver further progress towards meeting the target to ensure all social homes meet the standard by 2010.

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much from *(a)* Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme funding and *(b)* Challenge Fund sources was spent on (i) mixed funding social rented housing, (ii) temporary social rented housing, (iii) Homebuy general market purchase, (iv) Homebuy general new build, (v) mixed funded low cost home ownership for sale, (vi) miscellaneous works to RSL stock, (vii) improvements to rented RSL stock, (viii) works only rehabilitation of rented RSL stock, (ix) works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale, (x) intermediate rent for key workers, (xi) Homebuy market purchase for key workers, (xii) Homebuy new build for key workers and (xiii) mixed funded sale for key workers in the East Midlands region in each year since 1997–98. [1302]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows funding through the Housing Corporation approved development programme in the east midlands region for the categories (i) to (ix). The information in the table does not include all programmes that the ADP is used for and therefore does not represent the total funding for the east midlands region. Other categories with funding during the time period covered by the table are Right to Acquire, Voluntary Purchase Grant, Do-It-Yourself Shared Ownership, and Temporary Intermediate and Market Rent Housing.

The Key Worker Living programme is limited to London and the wider south-east, therefore there is no investment in categories (x) to (xiii) in the east midlands through this programme.

The Challenge Fund was limited to London, south-east and eastern regions, therefore there is no Challenge Fund expenditure in the East Midlands.

Expenditure for the East Midlands Region from 1997–98 to 2004–05

								£ million
	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
(i) Mixed funded Social Rent	20.34	18.79	21.36	23.63	25.31	31.61	40.14	48.07
(ii) Temporary Social Housing	1.42	0.00	0.29	0.40	0.02	0.21	0.12	0.27
(iii) Homebuy market purchase	0.00	0.00	0.47	1.01	1.43	1.05	2.31	3.30
(iv) Homebuy New Build	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00
(v) Mixed-funded Low Cost Home Ownership	3.26	2.87	1.87	2.48	3.00	4.14	8.33	12.42
(vi) Miscellaneous Works	4.33	1.35	2.83	3.39	3.26	2.02	1.05	0.37
(vii) Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	0.00	0.00	0.71	0.85	0.75	0.23	0.21	0.01
(viii) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.08	0.23	0.03	0.54	0.41
(ix) Works only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Note:

Categories (vii), (viii), and (ix) are included in Miscellaneous Works (vi) for years 1997–98 and 1998–99.

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable housing units built or procured through *(a)* the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme and *(b)* the Challenge Fund were classified as (i) mixed funding social rented housing, (ii) temporary social rented housing, (iii) Homebuy general market purchase, (iv) Homebuy general new build, (v) mixed funded low cost home ownership for sale, (vi) miscellaneous works to RSL stock, (vii) improvements to rented RSL stock, (viii) works only rehabilitation of rented RSL stock, (ix) works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale, (x) intermediate rent for key workers, (xi) Homebuy market purchase for key workers, (xii) Homebuy new build for key workers and (xiii) mixed funded sale for key workers in the East Midlands region in each year since 1997–98. [1303]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows completions through the Housing Corporation approved development programme in the east midlands region for the categories (i) to (ix). The information in the table does not include all programmes that the ADP is used for and therefore does not represent the total funding for the region. Other categories with completions during the time period covered by the table are Right to Acquire, Voluntary Purchase Grant, Do-It-Yourself Shared Ownership, and Temporary Intermediate and Market Rent Housing.

The Key Worker Living programme is limited to London and the wider south-east, therefore there is no investment in categories (x) to (xiii) in the east midlands through this programme.

The Challenge Fund was limited to London, south-east and eastern regions, therefore there are no Challenge Fund completions recorded for east midlands.

Completions in units for the East Midlands region from 1997–98 to 2004–05

Year (units completed)	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
(i) Mixed funded social rent	1,489	1,723	1,385	1,222	1,225	1,000	1,030	1,116
(ii) Temporary social housing	179	75	59	41	4	0	19	0
(iii) Homebuy market purchase	0	0	34	70	88	63	108	124
(iv) Homebuy new build	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
(v) Mixed-funded low cost home ownership	451	293	341	191	230	158	282	432
(vi) Miscellaneous works	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(vii) Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(viii) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(ix) Works only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note:

Categories (vi) to (ix) do not have complete records of units.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on Government plans to build 21,000 homes on green belt around Bournemouth. [1876]

Yvette Cooper: There are no Government plans to build 21,000 more homes on green belt around Bournemouth. The South West Regional Assembly—as the regional planning body—are working to prepare the new Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West which will look at housing need in the period to 2026. However, no proposed planned housing figures or locations for development have been made by either the Regional Assembly, the strategic planning authorities or the Government.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable housing units built or procured through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme and Challenge Fund were *(a)* mixed funded social rented housing, *(b)* temporary social rented housing, *(c)* homebuy general market purchase, *(d)* homebuy general new build, *(e)* mixed funded low cost home ownership for sale, *(f)* miscellaneous works to RSL stock, *(g)* reimprovements to rented RSL stock, *(h)* works only rehabilitation of rented RSL stock, *(i)* works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale, *(j)* intermediate rent for key workers, *(k)* homebuy market purchase for key workers, *(l)* homebuy new build for key workers and *(m)* mixed funded sale for key workers in the West Midlands Region in each year since 1997–98; and how much was spent on each category in each year. [1843]

Yvette Cooper: The following tables show completions and expenditure through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme, for categories from *(a)* to *(i)*. The information in the tables do not include all programmes that the ADP is used for and therefore does not represent the total funding for the West Midlands region. Other categories with funding during the time period covered by the table are Right to Acquire, Voluntary Purchase Grant, Starter Home Initiative, Do-It-Yourself Shared Ownership, and Temporary Intermediate and Market Rent Housing.

The Key Worker Living programme was limited to London and the wider South East, therefore there are no completions or investment in categories *(j)* to *(m)* in the West Midlands region through this programme.

The Challenge Fund was limited to London, south-east and eastern regions, therefore there is no Challenge Fund expenditure in west midlands.

Funding and completions are not directly comparable, as funding will relate to projects running, not necessarily units completed, in any one year.

Completions in units for the West Midlands Region from 1997–98 to 2004–05

Units completed	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
(a) Mixed funded Social Rent	2,213	2,022	2,189	1,816	1,496	2,184	1,474	1,430
(b) Temporary Social Rented Housing	304	163	72	49	34	5	9	0
(c) Homebuy market purchase	0	0	0	69	58	101	206	274
(d) Homebuy New Build	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
(e) Mixed-funded Low Cost Home Ownership	463	387	342	171	138	143	189	440
(f) Miscellaneous Works	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(g) Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(h) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(i) Works only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note:

Categories *(f)* to *(i)* do not have complete records of units.

Expenditure for the West Midlands Region from 1997–98 to 2004–05

£ million	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
(a) Mixed funded Social Rent	36.38	36.59	37.93	44.36	50.37	55.55	71.48	77.63
(b) Temporary Social Housing	1.88	0.00	0.89	0.57	0.51	0.14	0.20	0.00
(c) Homebuy market purchase	0.00	0.00	0.69	1.18	1.21	2.34	5.25	8.39
(d) Homebuy New Build	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00
(e) Mixed-funded Low Cost Home Ownership	6.60	4.04	2.50	2.07	1.31	2.89	6.75	13.73
(f) Miscellaneous Works	5.31	2.49	0.64	1.22	0.75	0.62	0.52	0.28
(g) Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	0.00	0.00	2.23	1.66	1.88	2.12	2.64	1.46
(h) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.03	0.29	0.37	0.93	0.28
(i) Works only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Note:
Categories *(g)*, *(h)*, and *(i)* are included in Miscellaneous Works *(f)* for years 1997–98 and 1998–99.

Council Tax

13. **David Davies:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will abandon plans for council tax rebanding in England. [1975]

Mr. Woolas: The terms of reference for the independent inquiry into local government funding by Sir Michael Lyons require him to make recommendations on how best to reform council tax. His report is due to be submitted by the end of this year to my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The report will inform the Government's decisions on council tax bands.

Martin Salter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to reform the council tax system. [1971]

Mr. David Miliband: We look forward to the report of the independent inquiry by Sir Michael Lyons which is due to be submitted to my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer by the end of the year. In the meantime, we continue to receive many representations on a variety of local government finance issues.

Green Belt

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what green belt designations *(a)* are being and *(b)* have been reviewed by the Regional Chambers, since their establishment. [1096]

Yvette Cooper: Regional Planning Bodies take the lead in reviewing the need for, and broad extent of, green belt designations. Site specific boundary changes are a matter for Development Plan Documents within the context set by the Regional Spatial Strategy. The information in the following tables show those green belts, and particular areas of green belt, that have been, or are being, subject to a specific review as part of a review of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

(a) Green belt designations that are being reviewed

Region	*Green belt*	*Affected area of GB*
East Midlands	Nottingham-Derby	Nottingham-Derby
East of England	London	South Essex Harlow Upper Lee Valley and Bishop's Stortford Stevenage
South West	Bristol-Bath South East Dorset Cheltenham-Gloucester	Bristol-Bath Bournemouth-Poole Cheltenham-Gloucester

(b) Green belt designations that have been reviewed

Region	*Green belt*	*Affected area of GB*
North East	Tyne and Wear	North Sunderland Morpeth
North West	Greater Manchester and Merseyside	Merseyside
East of England	London Cambridge	South Bedfordshire Cambridge

Local Authority Housing Stock

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many registered social landlords have taken over council housing; if he will list those which *(a)* have been put under supervision by the Housing Corporation, *(b)* have been the subject of mergers or takeovers and *(c)* have broken (i) rent guarantees and (ii) Housing Corporation rent guidelines. [1752]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* Since 1988 204 registered social landlords have received housing from local authorities as part of the-large scale voluntary transfer programme. 183 of these were established solely for the purpose of receiving housing from a local authority.

(a) Registered social landlords (RSLs) that have been established solely for the purpose of receiving housing from a local authority which have been in Housing Corporation supervision for a period of time since registration

Transfer date	*RSL name*	*Date in supervision*
13 June 1990	Bedfordshire Pilgrims	December 1994
26 March 1996	Beechdale Community	October 1997
31 March 1998	Bentilee Community Local Housing LHC	June 2000
6 April 1992	Broomleigh	March 1999
15 November 2000	Chester and District HA	May 2003
22 March 1999	Clapton Community Housing Trust	July 1999
20 February 1996	Drum HAL (formerly East Hampshire)	April 2001
22 September 1997	Eden HA	December 1998
3 October 1994	Evesham and Pershore	March 2001
9 March 1994	Hart	August 2000
31 January 1994	Hermitage	October 2000
29 January 1992	High Weald	July 1995
23 March 1998	Kerrier Home LHC	December 1999
25 January 1999	Leasowe Community Homes LHC	March 2000
9 March 1998	Limehurst Village Trust	August 1999
27 May 1993	Magna	October 1998
27 July 1990	Medina	January 2000
13 February 2001	Mendip HA	January 2004
10 September 1990	Nucleus	March 2004
31 March 1994	Ridgehill	March 1999
13 February 2001	Riviera	December 2002

(a) Registered social landlords (RSLs) that have been established solely for the purpose of receiving housing from a local authority which have been in Housing Corporation supervision for a period of time since registration

Transfer date	*RSL name*	*Date in supervision*
7 July 1997	SoHA Housing Ltd. (formerly South Oxfordshire)	March 1998
23 March 1994	South Shropshire	January 1994
1 March 1999	South Somerset Homes	June 2001
30 July 1990	South Wight	January 1997
28 March 1990	Swale	March 1991
13 November 2003	Teign HA	May 2005
21 February 1996	Ten Sixty Six	July 2000
29 March 1989	West Kent	October 1993
4 April 1990	Wherry	June 1998
29 March 1999	Willow Park Housing Trust	June 2000
28 February 1991	Yorkshire Community Housing Ltd.	November 2000
28 March 1991	Twynham	July 2002
31 March 2003	Walsall HT	July 2003
26 February 2002	Weaver Vale	August 2004

(b) The following RSLs have been the subject of mergers or takeovers.

Once associations have been registered with the Corporation they may set up group structures, join existing groups, transfer their engagements or be subsumed into other RSLs. Of those associations listed, the following have undertaken some group/merger activity:

RSL number	*Association name*	*Status*
L3979	Broomleigh HA Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of Downland Affinity Group Ltd. (LH4087)
L4211	Clapton Community Housing Trust Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of Guinness Trust (LH0036)
LH4050	Evesham and Pershore HA Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of Rooftop Housing Group Ltd. (L4404)
LH4031	Hart HA Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of Sentinel Housing Group Ltd. (LH4132)
LH4030	Hermitage HA Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of the Parchment Housing Group (LH4131)
LH3958	High Weald HA Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of Town and Country Housing Group (L4251)
L4159	Limehurst Village Trust	Now a subsidiary of West Pennine HA (L0252)
L3950	Magna HA Ltd.	Established Non Asset Holding Parent—Magna HGL (LH4227)
L4195	Leasowe Community Homes Local Housing Company	Now a subsidiary of Arena Housing Association Ltd. (L1700)
L3900	Medina HA Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of Western Challenge Housing Group (LH4175)
L4194	The Nucleus HG Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of London and Quadrant Housing Trust (LH0015)
LH4033	Ridgehill HA Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of William Sutton Housing Association Ltd. (LH4406)
LH3898	South Wight HA Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of Southern Housing Group Ltd. (LH3947)
LH3888	Swale HA Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of Amicus Group Ltd. (L4216)
LH3866	Wherry HA Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of Anglia Housing Group Ltd. (LH4046)
L3886	Twynham HA Ltd.	Now a subsidiary of Sovereign Housing Group Ltd. L4438

(c) Which RSLs have broken (i) rent guarantees and (ii) Housing Corporation rent guidelines.

No RSL that has been established solely for the purpose of receiving housing from a local authority has broken rent commitments given to tenants at ballot. 12 have been granted exemptions from compliance with the Government rent restructuring guidelines which were introduced in April 2002. In all cases these are transfer organisations whose business plans assumed higher rates of increase after transfer than is now permitted under the Government guidelines. As tenants voted for transfer proposals that were based on the higher rents exemptions were agreed to ensure tenants received the works and services for which a commitment had been given.

Local authority housing that has transferred to RSLs since the introduction of rent restructuring has been on the basis of business plans and valuations that comply with the current rent guidelines.

Local Strategic Partnerships

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what studies the Department has commissioned of the workings of local strategic partnerships. [1441]

Mr. Woolas: In 2002 the Department commissioned a comprehensive Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) evaluation and action learning programme, which will complete by the end of this year. Key components include: in-depth case study research, surveys of all LSPs every two years, and research based guidance on a range of topics highlighting good practice and advice.

This research was jointly commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department for Transport. Findings indicate that LSPs have made good progress since their recent establishment; however, there are areas for improvement to which the research has produced pragmatic support. Evidence from the research also directly informs evolving policy on community leadership.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has additionally commissioned a small number of neighbourhood-renewal specific studies to complement the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister-wide evaluation. One study summarised and analysed the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies produced by the 88 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) areas. Another study summarised overall progress with LSPs in the 88 NRF areas, drawing mainly on existing evidence.

Public Toilets

John Hemming: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many public toilets there were on a given date in each year between 1990 and 2004, broken down by Government Office Region. [1618]

Mr. Woolas: The provision and maintenance of toilets in public places is at the discretion of local authorities who have, under section 87 of the Public Health Act 1936, a power to provide public conveniences, but no duty to do so. For this reason, the information requested is not held centrally. The information in the following table has however been obtained from commercial and industrial property data held by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).

Number of public conveniences: Government Office Regions, 2000–2004[1]—Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) analysis of provisional Valuation Office Agency data

Government Office Region	*2000*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
North East	286	280	276	260
North West	565	538	519	509
Yorkshire and the Humber	567	536	520	496
East Midlands	439	418	411	399
West Midlands	437	428	416	408
East of England	578	574	561	560
London	500	474	451	419
South East	871	846	808	788
South West	1,099	1,063	1,034	1,014
England	5,342	5,157	4,996	4,853
Wales	745	725	705	686
England and Wales	6,087	5,882	5,701	5,539

[1] Data as at 1 October 2000, and 1 April for 2002, 2003 and 2004.

The table gives the number of public conveniences as at 1 October 2000 and 1 April for 2002, 2003 and 2004. No data prior to 2000 and for 2001 are currently available. The statistics are provisional pending the release of revised VOA commercial and industrial property data on 30 June 2005.

Totals given in the table show conveniences that are open to the public. They will include stand alone conveniences, and also those located in (for example) car parks and shopping malls.

Sustainable Communities

John Battle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the Royal Institute of British Architects' proposals for Better Neighbourhoods—Designing for Sustainability; and if he will make a statement. [1731]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to delivering high quality, well-designed sustainable communities that can offer everyone a decent home that they can afford in a community in which they want to live and work, now and in the future. I welcome the continuing commitment of the Royal Institution of British Architects to this important agenda.

The Government are committed to promoting sustainable forms of new development. Examples include:

utilising public land to demonstrate best practice in sustainable design and construction techniques and mixed tenure through programmes such as English Partnerships' Millennium Communities programme;

Planning Policy Statement 22, which advises on renewable energy, expects local planning authorities to devise policies that promote and encourage the development of renewable energy resources;

Raising building energy performance standards through a review of Part L of the Building Regulations;

developing the Code for Sustainable Buildings; and

support to the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment to provide Enabling advice to all of the 17 Building Schools for the Future Pathfinder and Wave 1 local education authorities.

Decisions on taxation are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Travellers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list planning permissions for Traveller sites that were refused by the local planning authority but were granted on appeal by the Secretary of State in each year since 2001. [279]

Yvette Cooper: The list detailing all the planning appeals for Traveller sites decided between 1 January 2001 and 30 April 2005 has been made available in the Library of the House. The list is sorted by appeal decision date and shows who decided the appeal—either The Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the First Secretary of State my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister or the First Secretary of State my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister. During the period, 111 appeals were allowed and 230 appeals were dismissed.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the performance of the Rural Payments Agency in dealing with the common agricultural policy reforms, with particular reference to single farm payments. [1322]

Jim Knight: Ministers meet regularly with officials from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). RPA is part way through a major change programme which, since the reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP), has focused on the introduction and administration of the single payment scheme (SPS). The time scales for the implementation of the change programme were acknowledged to be stretching from the outset. Despite this challenge, RPA has made considerable progress with the introduction of the single payment scheme.

By the 16 May closing date 115,196 applications to the SPS had been received, and I am satisfied that this covers not only applications from those previously in receipt of subsidy but has also brought additional land into the scheme thus contributing to the Department's sustainable agricultural and environmental objectives. The number of applications received is in line with RPA's projections for applicants to the new scheme.

RPA has been working closely with the National Farmers Union and other industry representatives to ensure the successful launch of the SPS. This was a very large undertaking reflecting the scale of the reform of the CAP successfully negotiated by this Government, and included:

the distribution of a series of policy booklets and three detailed guidance booklets;

the provision of extensive information on the RPA website, resulting in approximately 6,000 hits per day at peak periods;

a sustained media advertising campaign to existing customers and potential new applicants;

undertaking, with Defra, 32 road shows across England attended by around 8,500 farmers;

distribution of over 12,000 videos, CD-ROMs and DVDs with key excerpts of the road shows introducing and explaining the SPS; and

the distribution of specimen forms to enable applicants to prepare the information required to apply for the scheme in advance of receiving the application form.

The change programme is closely monitored through a joint RPA/Defra programme board which reports via the permanent secretary to Ministers. The programme makes use of regular external reviews, including the Office for Government Commerce Gateway Review process, who reported in their latest review of the programme in January 2005 that the review team finds that the programme is under strong leadership and has very visible ministerial and Defra support. They also considered that the programme continues to be managed in a professional manner and given stability in the programme scope, there is the desire and capability to deliver the programme successfully against challenging time scales.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the (i) Committee for the implementation of the Community framework for co-operation in the field of accidental or deliberate marine pollution, (ii) Committee for the implementation of legislation on ambient air quality assessment and management, (iii) Committee for the adaptation to technical and scientific progress of the air quality limit values and guide values for sulphur dioxide and suspended particulates and (iv) Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of the directive on air quality standards for nitrogen dioxide met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [571]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Committee for the implementation of the Community framework for cooperation in the field of accidental or deliberate marine pollution sits twice yearly. In relation to the specified presidencies, the committee sat as follows: *(a)* once during the Italian Presidency in September 2003; *(b)* once during the Irish Presidency in March 2004; *(c)* once during the Netherlands Presidency in September 2004. The UK expert attending each meeting was the Head of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency Counter Pollution and Response Branch.

The Committee for the implementation of legislation on ambient air quality assessment and management did not meet during the Italian, Irish or Dutch Presidencies.

The Committee for the adaptation to technical and scientific progress of the air quality limit values and guide values for sulphur dioxide and suspended particulates relates to part of Directive 80/779/EEC which was repealed with effect from 19 July 2001. This committee therefore did not meet during the periods in question.

The Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of the directive on air quality standards for nitrogen dioxide relates to part of Directive 85/203/EEC which was repealed with effect from 19 July 2001. The committee therefore did not sit during these Presidencies.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the (i) Committee for the approximation of the laws of the member states relating to noise emission in the environment by equipment for use outdoors, (ii) Committee for the adaptation to technical progress and for the implementation of the directive on contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms and (iii) Committee for the adaptation to technical and scientific progress and implementation of the directive on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [629]

Mr. Morley: The Committee for the approximation of the laws of the member states relating to noise emission in the environment by equipment for use outdoors falls within the responsibility of Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. This committee did not meet during the Italian, Irish or Dutch Presidencies.

The Health and Safety Executive have confirmed that the Committee for the adaptation to technical progress and for the implementation of the directive on contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms did not meet during the three Presidencies.

Between June 2003 and December 2004, the periods in question, the Committee for the adaptation to technical and scientific progress and implementation of the directive on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms met twice in the form of the Competent Authorities meetings on 3 December 2003 and 1 April 2004. Both meetings were held in Brussels and were attended by Defra policy officials. The purpose of the meetings was for member states to share experiences of operating the directive.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the (i) Committee for the implementation of the directive relating to the availability of consumer information on fuel economy and carbon dioxide emissions in respect of the marketing of new passenger cars, (ii) Advisory Committee for the implementation of the directive on the limitation of volatile organic compounds due to the use of organic solvents in certain activities and installations and (iii) Committee for the adaptation to technical and scientific progress of the directive on the prevention and reduction of the environmental pollution by asbestos met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [634]

Mr. Morley: The Committee for the implementation of the directive relating to the availability of consumer information on fuel economy and carbon dioxide emissions in respect of the marketing of new passenger cars did not meet during the Italian, Irish or Dutch Presidencies.

No meetings were held, during the periods in question, of the Advisory Committee for the implementation of the directive on the limitation of volatile organic compounds due to the use of organic solvents in certain activities and installations.

As to the Committee for the adaptation to technical and scientific progress of the directive on the prevention and reduction of the environmental pollution by asbestos, I understand this committee did not meet during these Presidencies.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the (i) Committee for the adaptation to scientific and technical progress of the directive on a limit value for lead in the air, (ii) Advisory Committee for the implementation of the directive on the reduction of the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels and (iii) Committee for the adaptation to technical progress and the implementation of the directive on the control of volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions resulting from the storage of petrol and its distribution from terminals to service stations met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [637]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Committee for the adaptation to scientific and technical progress of the directive on a limit value for lead in the air relates to part of Directive 82/884/EEC which was repealed with effect from 19 July 2001. This committee therefore did not meet during the Italian, Irish or Dutch Presidencies.

The Advisory Committee for the implementation of the directive on the reduction of the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels did not meet during the periods in question.

The Committee for the adaptation to technical progress and the implementation of the directive on the control of volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions resulting from the storage of petrol and its distribution from terminals to service stations did not meet during these Presidencies.

Milk Price

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average price paid by consumers for a litre of milk has been in each year since 1980. [1538]

Jim Knight: The average prices paid by consumers for pasteurised whole milk, collected by the Office for National Statistics, are shown in the table.

Average retail milk prices

	Pence per litre
1980	30
1981	33
1982	35
1983	37
1984	38
1985	40
1986	42
1987	44
1988	46
1989	49
1990	54
1991	56
1992	60
1993	60
1994	63
1995	63

Average retail milk prices

	Pence per litre
1996	63
1997	62
1998	60
1999	60
2000	60
2001	65
2002	63
2003	65
2004	62
2005 (to May)	62

Source:
Office for National Statistics RP20

TREASURY

Immigration

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of people who immigrated into the UK in each year between 1990 and 2004. [2581]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Frank Field, dated 8 June 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question regarding estimates for the number of people migrating to the UK in each year between 1990 and 2004. (2581)

The methodology used to make estimates of international migration to and from the UK has been improved in recent years. The new methodology has been used to produce revised estimates back to 1991. Therefore the estimate for 1990 would not be directly comparable with those for other years. For this reason, the attached table shows estimates for 1991 onwards. The most recent estimates are for 2003. Estimates for 2004 will be published in November 2005.

These estimates are extracted from the annual reference volume "Series MN, International Migration". The most recent edition, "Series MN no.30, International migration, 2003", includes estimates for 1994 to 2003. Copies of this publication, and earlier editions, can be accessed at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Product.asp?vlnk = 507.

Total International migration[1]: 1991 to 2003

Thousand

United Kingdom	*Inflow[2] (immigration to the UK)*
1991	328.4
1992	267.6
1993	265.1
1994	314.4
1995	311.9
1996	317.8
1997	326.1
1998	390.3
1999	453.8
2000	483.4
2001	479.6
2002	512.8
2003	512.6

[1] Data for 1991–2003 are based mainly on data from the International Passenger Survey. Includes adjustments for (1) those whose intended length of stay changes so that their migrant status changes; (2) asylum seekers and their dependants not identified by the IPS; and (3) flows between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

[2] These estimates are extracted from the annual reference volume Series MN, International Migration. The most recent edition, Serves MN no. 30, International migration, 2003, includes estimates for 1994 to 2003. Copies of this publication, and earlier editions, can be accessed at: http://www.Statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Product.asp?vlnk = 507

Manufacturing (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were employed in manufacturing industry in *(a)* Brent East and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 1997. [2540]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Ms Sarah Teather, dated 8 June 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many people were employed in the manufacturing industry in Brent East Parliamentary Constituency and in each London borough. (2540)

The attached table shows the number of employee jobs in manufacturing, in the requested areas, from 1997 to 2003. This is the latest year for which information is available. The data are published on the Office for National Statistics' Nomis website (http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/). Comparable figures for those local areas, including self-employed jobs are not available.

Employee jobs in the manufacturing industry—1997 to 2003

Thousand

	[1]*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Brent East Parliamentary Constituency	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
London boroughs							
Barking and Dagenham	15	16	16	12	10	9	9
Barnet	5	5	6	5	4	4	4
Bexley	8	9	10	9	9	8	7
Brent	13	13	14	14	14	12	10
Bromley	6	6	6	6	6	5	5
Camden	15	13	14	14	14	13	13
City of London	5	5	3	4	5	4	3
Croydon	10	9	10	9	8	7	7
Baling	13	14	14	13	12	11	11
Enfield	11	11	11	11	10	9	8
Greenwich	6	6	6	6	5	4	4
Hackney	11	11	9	8	7	7	6
Hammersmith and Fulham	5	6	6	7	7	7	7
Haringey	8	8	7	6	6	5	5

Employee jobs in the manufacturing industry—1997 to 2003

Thousand

	[1]*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Harrow	7	6	7	6	6	6	6
Havering	7	7	6	7	5	5	5
Hillingdon	12	13	13	13	12	11	9
Hounslow	11	10	9	8	8	8	7
Islington	12	11	11	11	11	9	10
Kensington and Chelsea	5	5	5	5	5	5	4
Kingston-upon-Thames	5	5	5	5	4	4	3
Lambeth	5	5	5	4	4	3	3
Lewisham	3	3	3	4	4	3	3
Merton	9	9	10	10	9	8	6
Newham	7	7	8	7	7	6	5
Redbridge	5	5	5	5	4	3	3
Richmond-upon-Thames	4	5	5	5	5	4	4
Southwark	12	12	13	13	12	11	11
Sutton	5	4	5	5	5	4	4
Tower Hamlets	15	16	19	16	16	15	14
Waltham Forest	7	8	8	8	6	6	5
Wandsworth	5	5	5	5	4	4	5
Westminster	20	21	22	21	19	18	17

[1] Data is for December of each year.

Source:

Annual Business Inquiry, 1998–2003; Annual Employment Survey, 1997

Live8 Concert (VAT)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received regarding the VAT liability of the proposed staging of the Live8 concert in Hyde Park; and if he will make a statement. [2406]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government have discussed VAT and other issues with Live8 and their advisers, and have already announced support with staging and clear-up costs for the Hyde Park event, worth some £500,000.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the private finance initiative and public private partnership projects the Treasury is undertaking; and what the status is of each. [2367]

John Healey: The Treasury's only PFI project is for its office building at 1 Horse Guards Road. Details of the scheme are on the Treasury website http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/about/about_building/about_goggs_goggs.cfm.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

EU Legislation

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what EU legislation was implemented by *(a)* the Employment Relations Bill 1999, *(b)* the Working Time Regulations 1999, *(c)* the Fire Precautions (Workplace) (Amendment) Regulations 1999, *(d)* the Transnational Information Consultation of Employees Regulation 1999, *(e)* the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, *(f)* the Wireless Telegraphy (Licence Charges) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, *(g)* the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Bill: Parts 1 and 3, *(h)* the Maternity and Parental Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2001, *(i)* the Building (Amendment) Regulations 2001 and the Building (Approved Inspectors etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2001 and *(j)* the Undertakings on Supermarket Supplier Relations (Code of Practice). [1709]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This question requests details of the EU legislation giving rise to a number of pieces of UK legislation. The following table giving the reply, indicating the source of the legislation, approximately one third of which is purely domestic and was not instigated by the EU.

UK legislation	*Implemented by:*
Employment Relations Bill 1999	Council Directive 98/23/EC Part-Time Work Council Directive 96/34/EC Parental Leave
Working Time Regulations 1999	Council Directive 93/104/EC on aspects of the organisation of working time
Fire Precautions (Workplace)(Amendment) Regulations 1999	Council Directive 89/39/EC Safety and Health of Workers at Work Council Directive 89/654/EC Minimum Health and Safety Requirements for the workplace
Transnational Information Consultation of Employees Regulation 1999	Council Directive 97/74/EC on the establishment of a European Works Council
Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000	Council Directive 98/23/EC Part-Time Work
Wireless Telegraphy (License Charges)(Amendment) Regulations 2000	Domestic legislation. However, compatible with Parliament and Council Directive 97/13/EC on common framework for general authorisations and individual licenses in the field of telecommunication services, now repealed by 2002/21/EC
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Bill: Parts 1 and 3	Domestic legislation
Maternity and Paternal Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2001	None. Amends and updates 1999 Regulations implementing Council

UK legislation	*Implemented by:*
	Directive 97/75/EC which amends and extends Council Directive 96/34/EC on framework agreement on parental leave
Building (Amendment) Regulations 2001	Domestic legislation
Undertakings on Supermarket Supplier Regulations (Code of Practice)	Domestic legislation

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what EU legislation was implemented by *(a)* the Industrial Training Levy (Construction Board) Order 2002, *(b)* the Employment Act 2002, *(c)* the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002, *(d)* the Flexible Working (Procedural Requirements) Regulations 2002, *(e)* the Dangerous Substances and Explosives Atmospheres Regulations 2002, *(f)* the Sale and Supply of Goods Consumer Regulations 2002, *(g)* the Additives for Use in Animal Nutrition (England) Regulations 2003, *(h)* the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (Amendment) Regulations 2003, *(i)* the Building (Amendment) Regulations 2003, *(j)* the Employment Relations Bill and *(k)* the Consumer Credit Regulations 2004. [1710]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This question requests details of the EU legislation giving rise to a number of pieces of UK legislation. The following table, indicating the source of the legislation, approximately one third of the pieces of legislation listed were not instigated by the EU.

UK legislation	*Implemented*
Industrial Training Levy (Construction Board) Order 2002	Domestic legislation
Employment Act 2002	Domestic legislation
Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002	Council Directive 76/769/EC (the Marketing and Use Directive) as amended by Council Directive 83/478/EC Council Directive 83/477/EC as amended by Council Directive 91/382/EC Council Directive 98/24/EC
Flexible Working (Procedural Requirements) Regulations 2002	Domestic legislation
Dangerous Substances and Explosives Atmospheres Regulations 2002	Council Directive 98/24/EC Chemical Agents Directive Council Directive 92/92/EC Explosives Atmospheres Directive
Sale and Supply of Goods Consumer Regulations 2002	Council Directive 99/44/EC on certain aspects of the sale of consumer goods and associated guarantees
Additives for use in animal nutrition (England) Regulations 2003	The enforcement of EC Regulation 1831/2003 on additives for use in animal nutrition will be provided by the Feeding Stuffs (England) Regulations 2005
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (Amendment) Regulations 2003	Council Directive 99/3 8/EC amending Council Directive 90/394/EC on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to carcinogens at work
Building (Amendment) Regulations 2003	Domestic legislation
Employment Relations Bill	Council Directive 2002/14/EC on Informing and Consulting Employees
Consumer Credit Regulations 2004	Domestic legislation

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the accuracy of analyses prepared for his Department of the number of deceased mineworkers' damages claims for *(a)* Nottinghamshire, *(b)* Derbyshire and *(c)* Leicestershire; and if he will make a statement. [1990]

Malcolm Wicks: Regional statistics in respect of live and deceased claims for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease classify the claim according to postal town codes of the solicitor handling the claim.

The Department is aware that the ratio of live to deceased cases in Notts/Derbys/Leics is well out of line with that of other regions. As at 31 March 2005 there were 23,002 live and 5,511 deceased claims registered and reflected in the regional statistics for Notts/Derbys/Leics—a ratio of 81 per cent. live to 19 per cent. deceased. The ratio for the other six regions ranged between 33 per cent. to 44 per cent. for live claims and 56 per cent. to 67 per cent. for deceased claims.

In order to assess the reasons for this variance, the Department's claims handlers, Capita, ran a report by claimant post code where the postal town was for Notts/Derbys/Leics. This report was then matched against a second report in respect of deceased claimants registered under the scheme, where they were registered with a solicitor in one of the other six regions.

This exercise confirmed that the 5,511 deceased claims registered against the Notts/Derbys/Leics postal town region was accurate. The exercise has also confirmed that there are an additional 26,500 deceased claims with Notts/Derbys/Leics post codes who are registered with a variety of solicitors spread among the other six regions.

Overseas Business Practices

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government take to ensure that overseas operations by companies registered in the UK do not harm underprivileged people overseas; and what form of redress such people may seek if they believe that they have been harmed by such activities. [624]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 25 May 2005]:* UK companies that operate overseas are subject to the laws applicable in those countries which will take account of the particular circumstances and practices of each host country. We encourage companies to apply high standards of corporate behaviour by addressing their environmental and social impacts wherever they operate, including adhering to relevant internationally agreed norms and initiatives. In line with this, we promote the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises which recommend standards of responsible business conduct for business and have written to the FTSE 100 companies to raise awareness of these expectations. We have also set our approach to encouraging environmentally and socially responsible practice internationally in our international Strategic Framework on Corporate Social Responsibility published in March.

Sellafield

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action is being taken to *(a)* contain the radioactive leakage at the Sellafield site and *(b)* protect (i) the workers at the site and (ii) the environment. [2007]

Malcolm Wicks: I am advised by the independent regulator, the Health and Safety Executive, that following the recent leak of liquid inside the THORP facility at Sellafield, the plant remains in a safe and stable state. Safety monitoring has confirmed that there has been no release of material and there is not risk to employees, to the local community or to the environment.

The material is contained within an engineered stainless lined totally enclosed cell designed to contain such leaks. Safety is the key priority and British Nuclear Group is working to recover the liquid in a safe and controlled manner. The regulators have been kept closely informed throughout.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the discovery on 19 April 2005 at the Sellafield site of the 20 tonne leakage of radioactive uranium and plutonium. [2008]

Malcolm Wicks: The recent leak of liquid inside the THORP facility at Sellafield has led to plant being closed while the situation is fully assessed. The plant is in a safe and stable state and there has been no release of material and there is no risk to employees, to the local community or to the environment. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is considering the future of THORP; any proposals will be subject to scrutiny by the safety and environmental regulators.

The Health and Safety Executive is carrying out an investigation and will make its findings public in due course.

Travel Industry Regulations

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has held with *(a)* the Association of British Travel Agents, *(b)* the Federation of Tour Operators and *(c)* the Association of Independent Tour Operators regarding steps to reduce the regulatory burden in the travel industry. [2164]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department is in regular contact with all of these organisations, and matters relating to the regulatory burden on the package travel industry are frequently discussed. Last year I also held two meetings with key stakeholders in this sector, including these three bodies, at which regulatory issues among others were discussed.

Recent discussions have focused on the review by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), in conjunction with the Department for Transport, of the future of provision of financial protection for consumers against the bankruptcy of air travel providers; on CAA guidance on the scope of the Civil Aviation (Air Travel Organisers' Licensing) Regulations; and on the three organisations continuing compliance with the requirements for approved bodies under the Package Travel Regulations.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Crime and Disorder Act

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will seek to apply section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to all statutory agencies. [1610]

Hazel Blears: Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on specific agencies to consider the potential impact of all their decisions and activities on crime and disorder. The scope of section 17 was included in a wider review of the partnership provisions of the Act earlier this year. The review looked at how local agencies could better embed crime and disorder reduction into their core business. It also assessed whether section 17 currently covers the right agencies and bodies. I am considering the findings from the review and the Government will announce proposals for making partnership working more effective later in the year.

Identity Cards

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to *(a)* develop the launch of the national identity register of instructions to issue identity cards and *(b)* review the Police IT Organisation. [549]

Andy Burnham: The Identity Cards programme development timescales allow for sufficient time to design, develop and implement a scheme with a thorough analysis and ongoing management of the risks. As the programme proceeds it will be subject to regular Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway reviews and have already been through a successful OGC Gateway Zero Review.

The launch of the Identity Cards scheme will be supported by a communications campaign which will explain the purpose of the scheme and the practicalities. The proposed new Agency will also work with the verification service users to encourage them to communicate directly with their staff and customers to explain the scheme.

The Review of the Police Information Technology Organisation has been completed and is currently being considered by Ministers.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces' Fighting Strength

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the fighting strength of the *(a)* British Army, *(b)* Royal Navy and *(c)* Royal Air Force has been in each year since 1992. [2185]

Mr. Touhig: The following table shows the full-time trained strength of UK armed forces at 1 April points since 1992, which includes trained UK regular forces, trained Gurkhas and FTRS (full-time reserve service) personnel. They do not include the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment, mobilised reservists or Activated Reservists.

	Naval Service[1]	*Army*	*Royal Air Force*
1992	55,930	140,630	81,970
1993	55,280	132,940	78,860
1994	52,410	121,760	74,210
1995	48,200	108,700	69,430
1996	45,550	103,560	62,510
1997	41,680	101,360	54,200
1998	40,480	100,880	52,680
1999[2]	39,320	99,900	51,910
2000	38,880	100,330	51,210
2001	38,540	[3,4,5]100,560	50,110
2002	37,490	[4,5]100,390	49,200
2003	37,600	[4,5]102,010	48,900
2004	37,470	[4,5]103,560	49,120
2005	36,320	102,440	49,210

[1] Naval Service includes Royal Navy and Marines.

[2] FTRS were created by the Reserve Forces Act 1996 and none existed before late 1997 and were formally recorded from late 1998 only.

[3] 1 April 2001 Army FTRS Officer figures are not available, data are for 1 March 2001.

[4] The Army Officer FTRS strength figures supplied to DASA between April 2001 and October 2004 are currently under review. Figures contained in this table have been supplied by the Army Personnel Centre and should be considered as provisional.

[5] provisional

Note:

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Gulf War Syndrome

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many claims in respect of Gulf War related illness have been *(a)* rejected and *(b)* accepted by the Veterans Agency office in Blackpool; and how many claims have been allowed the right of appeal. [2052]

Mr. Touhig: Our records indicate that as at 30 April 2005,1,477 claims have been accepted and 119 rejected in respect of Gulf War related illness. All decisions issued by the Veterans Agency carry a right of appeal.

HMS Turbulent

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the destination of HMS Turbulent following departure from Devonport was on 16 January 2004. [2117]

Mr. Ingram: HMS Turbulent's destination was Rame Head, near Plymouth.

Joint Strike Fighter

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the deployment of the Joint Strike fighter aircraft in the RAF. [2119]

Mr. Ingram: RAF Leeming, RAF Cottesmore, RAF Marham, RAF Lossiemouth and RAF St. Mawgan, are currently being considered as potential bases for the Joint Strike Fighter (the procurement solution to the Joint Combat Aircraft requirement). I expect to make a decision on basing later this year.

Life-expired Ordnance

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the destruction of life-expired ordnance at Shoeburyness by QinetiQ will not detonate explosives contained within the SS Montgomery sunk in the Thames Estuary. [1352]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* The wreck of the SS Richard Montgomery is well outside all the Shoeburyness Range danger areas. No incidents of any nature have been reported as a result of the activities at Shoeburyness. The wreck is examined by diver and sonar survey on behalf of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency on a regular basis.

Low-flying Aircraft (Wye Valley)

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many low flying aircraft were used in the Wye Valley between Hay-on-Wye and Builth Wells from 27 May to 2 June. [2378]

Mr. Touhig: Information is only recorded in such a way as to enable us to provide data for the whole of Low Flying Area (LFA) 7, which covers almost all of Wales. The number of aircraft booked into LFA 7 over the period in question are shown in the table.

	Aircraft
Friday 27 May	56
Tuesday 31 May	38
Wednesday 1 June	6
Thursday 2 June	7

The Low Flying System is closed at weekends, and was also closed on 30 May, as this was a bank holiday. At such periods, special permission from the Directorate of Air Staff is required for aircraft to operate in the low flying system. The only aircraft that are recorded as having operated in the system over this period were the Red Arrows, who flew through LFA 7 on both Saturday and Sunday; and the Dakota from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, which operated on Sunday and Monday.

Military Exercise (English Channel)

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* UK and *(b)* other nations' vessels were involved in the Thursday war military exercise in the English Channel on 15 January 2004. [2118]

Mr. Ingram: The only Royal Navy vessels involved in the Thursday war exercise on 15 January 2004 were HMS Cumberland, HMS Edinburgh and RFA Brambleleaf. No vessels of other nations were involved on that day.

Nuclear Weapons (Lakenheath)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK nuclear weapons are available for use by the Government; and how many US tactical nuclear weapons there are at RAF Lakenheath. [2335]

John Reid: In line with the policy set out in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review, the United Kingdom maintains a stockpile of less than 200 operationally available Trident warheads, 48 of which are onboard the single submarine on deterrent patrol.

On the issue of US nuclear weapons, NATO's Strategic Concept (paragraph 63) states that:

> "nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO provide an essential political and military link between the European and North American members of the Alliance. The Alliance will therefore maintain adequate nuclear forces in Europe."

Numbers of US nuclear weapons in the UK can and do vary, and the capability for deployments of such weapons to and from the UK remains extant regardless of the particular number of weapons in the UK at any given time.

It is NATO and national policy not to comment on the detail of such nuclear deployments.

Panther Vehicle

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the difference is between the UK specification for the Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle and the version commissioned by the Italian Army. [386]

Mr. Ingram: As a Command and Liaison Vehicle, Panther will provide protected mobility and, through the Bowman communications and information system, a sophisticated communications capability. Since the roles of the UK's Panther Vehicle and the Italian Light Multirole Tactical Vehicle are different, their specifications are also different; there will be differences in areas such as protection, situational awareness and communications.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* design, *(b)* manufacture and *(c)* licence costs are of the Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle to (i) Iveco and (ii) other non-UK contractors. [387]

Mr. Ingram: The Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle contract with BAE Systems Land Systems (formally Alvis Vickers Ltd.) is £166 million for 401 vehicles. Further contracts are envisaged for the fitting of Bowman radios, and other systems, therefore the total value could reach £193 million. This price includes the design and manufacture of the vehicle. The licence cost paid to Iveco and to non-UK contractors is withheld given its confidential nature.

Prince Andrew

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions HRH Prince Andrew has used his Department's vehicles, vessels and planes for private use in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; and at what cost. [2048]

Mr. Touhig: His Royal Highness the Duke of York has not made private use of the official transport facilities of the Ministry of Defence in 2003 or 2004.

Project Connaught

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent by his Department on Project Connaught; and how much was spent on the Aspire Consortium's involvement. [1120]

Mr. Touhig: Project Connaught started in the summer of 1999. The following year it combined with its Salisbury Plain counterpart, Project Allenby, to form Project Allenby/Connaught, since when cost records have been kept on a combined basis. As at the end of financial year 2004–05 total expenditure on the project was some £23.3 million, of which the cost of the Aldershot based project team was some £1.9 million.

To date there has been no MOD expenditure on the Aspire consortium as we are still in negotiations.

Royal Irish Regiment

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Class 2 Royal Irish Regiment warrant officers *(a)* applied for and *(b)* took part in promotion boards in each of the past five years, broken down by (i) gender and (ii) religion; and how many of these applications were (A) successful and (B) rejected. [2184]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested in respect of gender is set out in the following table. All eligible candidates are considered by the promotion board.

	Candidates eligible			*Appointed*	
	Total	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
2000	35	35	[1]—	10	2
2001	25	25	0	5	0
2002	45	45	[1]—	6	1
2003	35	35	[1]—	8	1
2004	45	45	[1]—	9	1

[1] Fewer than five.

Figures for candidates eligible have been rounded to the nearest multiple of five, in line with our normal practice for published statistics. As lists of successful candidates are published and the gender breakdown can be determined from the list, actual figures are given for those appointed.

These figures do not include part-time Royal Irish, as this information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

A breakdown by religion is not held in a readily retrievable form and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

UK Presidency (EU)

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what communication activities are planned in relation to the policy areas covered by his Department during the UK Presidency of the EU; and what budget has been allocated for these activities. [1648]

John Reid: External communications activity for the EU Presidency is being coordinated centrally by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

In contributing to this effort the MOD has drawn up a comprehensive communications strategy covering a range of media and communications activity to present European Security and Defence Policy to Parliament and the general public, including a feature in the mobile "Defence Tourer" exhibition and a contribution to the House of Commons Defence Committee conference at the Royal United Services Institute in November.

There is no central departmental budget allocated for these activities. Costs lie where they fall across a number of directorates.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Licensing Act

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) if she will put back the second appointed day of the Licensing Act 2003 by at least eight months; [947]

(2) if the Government will put back the deadline for licensees to submit a conversion licence application under the Licensing Act 2003 by at least six months; [948]

(3) what assistance the Government will provide to help licensees meet the deadline for completion of conversion applications under the Licensing Act 2003; [952]

(4) what steps the Government will take to enable licensees *(a)* to fulfil the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 with regard to applications to convert premises and *(b)* to meet the deadline for applications of 6 August. [1194]

James Purnell: As I announced to the House on 8 June, the Government will shortly make an order confirming that 24 November will be the second appointed day. New licences and certificates will have effect from that date.

The Government have no intention of extending the period for converting existing licences. Potential applicants and local authorities are aware of the timetable and it would be counter-productive to alter it at this late stage.

We are aware that there are concerns over the low number of applicants so far. However, we believe that the deadline of 6 August 2005 allows applicants sufficient time to secure the conversion of their existing licences, should they apply for this. We have invested significant resources in making potential applicants, and other interested parties, aware of the timetable for implementation. Licensing authorities have also run road shows, surgeries and other events. The Government have also produced detailed guidance on our website, and have circulated a regular newsletter, Licensing Countdown, to keep the public and the industry fully informed of progress in implementing the 2003 Act.

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what consultations her Department has undertaken with *(a)* the licensed trade and *(b)* local authorities since 7 February regarding the coming into force of the Licensing Act 2003; [951]

(2) what recommendations the Government have implemented since 7 February in relation to the Licensing Act 2003 began following representations from the licensed trade and local authorities. [1149]

James Purnell: Since 7 February my officials have held regular meetings with a stakeholder advisory group which comprises representatives of the licensed trade, local authorities, the police, and magistrates, among others. The advisory group met on 16 February; 15 March; 19 April and 16 May. The bodies represented on the advisory group include:

Alcohol Concern
Arts Council England
Association of Chief Police Officers
Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers
Association of London Government
Bar Entertainment and Dance Association
British Beer and Pub Association
British Hospitality and Restaurant Association
British Institute of Innkeeping
British Marine Federation
British Retail Consortium
Business in Sport and Leisure
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
Cinema Exhibitors Association
Committee of Registered Clubs Association
Editor of Paterson's Licensing Acts
Federation of Licensed Victuallers Association
Guild of Master Victuallers
Justices' Clerks Society
Licensed Victuallers of Wales
Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS)
Local Government Association
The Magistrates' Association
Musicians Union

I also chair a high level group to ensure the smooth running of the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003. The high level group met on 22 March; 4 May; and 23 May. It comprises representatives of:

Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Home Office
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Association of Chief Police Officers
British Beer and Pub Association
Bar Entertainment and Dance Association
British Retail Consortium
Central Council for Physical Recreation
Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS)

Local Government Association
Tourism Alliance

Since 7 February, the DCMS has been engaged in targeted communications activity to encourage at-risk groups to make their applications as quickly as possible. We have recently re-doubled these efforts. We are also issuing guidance for applicants to help address some of the common mistakes which stakeholders inform us are being made on application forms and there will also be a revamp of the licensing pages on the DCMS website (www.culture.gov.uk) to make them more accessible for applicants. In addition, we have responded to requests from stakeholders seeking help on a number of issues including embedded restrictions; whether a personal licence holder must be at a premises at all times; and how transferred licences should be dealt with during the transitional period. The DCMS position on these matters has been circulated widely through the stakeholder groups and has helped ease the transitional process for both licensing authorities and applicants.

Private Finance Projects

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the private finance initiative and public private partnership projects her Department is undertaking; and what the status of each is. [2361]

Mr. Caborn: My Department is not itself undertaking any PFI or PPP contracts. The Department's executive agency, the Royal Parks (TRP), has entered into the following:

Inn the Park at St. James Park. This is a contract to provide new catering equipment and facilities at an existing site in return for the right to run a catering concession.

The Boathouse at Regent's Park. Under this contract a new building was supplied by the contractor, and a catering concession was granted to them.

Pembroke Lodge at Richmond. The building was restored by the contractor and a catering concession was granted to them.

All three are now operational.

Tote

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations her Department has made to the EU Commission on the sale of the Tote. [2697]

Mr. Caborn: The Government first notified their plans for the sale of the Tote to a racing trust to the European Commission on 27 May 2004, and provided additional information to the Commission on 9 September 2004 and 15 March 2005. I met Commissioner Kroes on 27 May to explain our proposals in person.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Legal Aid

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will take steps to ensure that the quality of *(a)* civil aid service and *(b)* criminal aid service available to local communities is not reduced as a result of the Legal Services Commission's proposals to introduce price competitive tendering to the legal aid system. [1799]

Bridget Prentice: Both the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) and the Legal Service Commission (LSC) are confident that proposals to introduce price competitive tendering (PCT) will not adversely impact on the existing provisions of legal aid service to local communities as a whole. By using peer review as a measure of the quality of service provided to clients, the LSC will be asked to monitor the impact of the new arrangements, and where necessary, to respond to any concerns that may arise.

Local Government Elections

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what the estimated cost was to public funds of administering the local elections in 2005; [87]

(2) what estimate the Government have made of the cost to public funds of postal voting in the local elections in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005. [88]

Ms Harman: This information is not collected centrally.

Travellers

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the provision of legal advice services to Travellers funded by the Department. [1758]

Bridget Prentice: The eligibility criteria for Gypsies and Travellers for civil legal aid are the same as for other individuals. The Legal Services Commission aims to ensure that all socially excluded groups including Gypsies and Travellers are able to access the legal advice for which they are eligible. To this end the Commission provides funding for a national helpline for Gypsies and Travellers for legal advice on housing matters and a pilot scheme to facilitate information and advice services for Gypsies and Travellers in Cambridgeshire on matters of social welfare law. The provision of early legal advice can lead to more timely and cost-effective resolution of disputes.

HEALTH

Chiropody

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which primary care trusts have introduced simple and routine chiropody services through measures other than by a registered podiatrist or chiropodist; and how many NHS patients have received chiropody treatment through measures other than by a registered podiatrist or chiropodist in each of the last 10 years; [2160]

(2) what assessment she has made of the provision of simple and routine NHS chiropody services by primary care trusts other than by a registered podiatrist or chiropodist; and if she will make a statement; [2161]

(3) what mechanisms have been put in place to assess the provision of simple and routine chiropody services by primary care trusts other than by a specialist podiatrist or chiropodist; and if she will make a statement; [2162]

(4) what definition of simple and routine services she uses in relation to chiropody services; and if she will list NHS chiropody treatments which are included within the definition. [2163]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally. Access to chiropody and podiatry services is a matter for primary care trusts.

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes there have been to fees charged by the Commission for Social Care Inspection since 1997; what representations she has received on charges; and if she will make a statement. [407]

Mr. Byrne: The current fee structure for regulated social care providers has been in place since 1 April 2002. The National Care Standards Commission was the regulator until 1 April 2004 when it was succeeded by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The fee structure has remained broadly the same during that period except for the introduction of fees for services being regulated for the first time. The fees were increased by 20 per cent. across the board with effect from 1 April 2003, 1 April 2004 and again from 1 April 2005.

The changes to the fee structure were consulted on in 2001. Some 165 responses were received. On each occasion the fees are increased, ministers receive some representations.

However, we have made special concessions for small care homes, adult placements, small domiciliary care agencies, and small nurse agencies. We have lowered the annual fee for small care homes and adult placements (£173 instead of £259), for small domiciliary care agencies (£540 instead of £1,080), and for small nurses' agencies (£360 instead of £720).

Continuing Care

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her estimate is of the cost in England of providing *(a)* free personal care and *(b)* free long-term care in each year until 2015. [2283]

Mr. Byrne: In England, the Government have accepted each of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Long Term Care except the recommendation to provide free personal care in all settings.

People who are eligible for national health service continuing care and those whose assets fall below the lower threshold used in the residential care means test automatically receive free personal care.

Making personal care free for everyone carries a very substantial and increasing cost, but would not raise the standard or range of services available. The estimated cost for 2003–04 is £1.5 billion.

The estimated costs for future years are shown in the table using 2003–04 constant prices. The projections take account of demographic change, in terms of numbers of older people by age, gender, household type and housing tenure. They assume that cost of care will rise by 2 per cent. per year in real terms, in line with average earnings. As with any projections, the figures should only be taken as broad estimates of the cost because of the uncertainty of projecting over such a long time scale.

Research conducted by personal social services research unit and the university of Leicester, for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, suggest that free personal and nursing care would increase United Kingdom public spending on long-term care for older people to £42.6 billion in 2051 (1.45 per cent. of gross domestic product (GDP)) as opposed to £35.4 billion (1.20 per cent. of GDP) under the current funding system (without free personal care). These projections are at constant 2000 prices.

Estimated costs of free personal care—England. Constant 2003–04 prices

	£ billion
2003	1.5
2004	1.6
2005	1.7
2006	1.8
2007	1.9
2008	2.0
2009	2.0
2010	2.1
2011	2.2
2012	2.3
2013	2.4
2014	2.5
2015	2.6

Source:

Department of Health analysis using projections supplied by personal social services research unit.

We have not made projections of the costs of making long-term care free.

General Practitioners

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many single-handed general practitioners practices there were in England in each year since 1997. [231]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested can be found at www.dh.gov.uk/workforcestatistics

GP Appointments

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact of the 48 hour access targets for general practitioners on availability of pre-booked routine appointments; what plans she has to revise those targets; and if she will make a statement. [2135]

Mr. Byrne: Latest monitoring data for April 2005 shows that about 1.5 per cent. of patients do not have the opportunity to book advance appointments. This is not acceptable practice and the Department is continuing to work with strategic health authorities to get primary care trusts to tackle the issue locally and ensure practices offer patients flexible as well as fast access.

High Dependency Care

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what percentage of the overall national budget for NHS hospitals the total annual cost for patients in intensive care and patients in high dependency care represent; [1513]

(2) what is the daily cost per NHS high dependency bed [1514]

Mr. Byrne: The cost of intensive and high dependency care is not separately identified from the annual financial returns of national health service providers.

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many high dependency beds there were in England and Wales in the most recent year for which there are records; [1520]

(2) how many intensive care beds there were in England in the most recent year for which records are held. [1543]

Mr. Byrne: As of 13 January 2005, there were 1,426 high dependency beds and 1,787 intensive care beds in England. Further data is available on the Department's website at: www.performance.dh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/index.htm. It is for the Welsh Assembly to provide the appropriate information for Wales.

Infertility Treatment

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have benefited from infertility treatment in *(a)* Brent and *(b)* each primary care trust in England in each year since 1997. [2541]

Caroline Flint: Information about the number of patients receiving national health service infertility treatment is not collected centrally.

Mental Health Services

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how she plans to provide further investment in specialist old age mental health services in accordance with section 2.2.8 of Better Health in Old Age, November 2004. [1521]

Mr. Byrne: Decisions on how funding is allocated locally for health services are the responsibility of local service planners, commissioners and providers, which can do so taking full account of local service patterns and priorities.

NHS (IT Programme)

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has for the development of the IT programme in the national health service; and when she expects it to be completed. [505]

Mr. Byrne: Through the national programme for information technology (NPfIT), the NHS Connecting for Health agency of the Department is delivering systems to change the way the national health service delivers care, and the experience of patients. It is a key component of delivering a modern and patient-centred NHS. NPfIT is being implemented by national application service providers, responsible for purchasing and integrating IT systems common to all users nationally; and by local service providers, responsible for supplying and integrating services and systems to perform functions in the local setting and to link to the national system.

A great many systems and services have already been put in place, including hospital-wide patient administration systems as well as many service-specific systems, in areas such as pathology, accident and emergency, maternity and mental health. For example, the programme has delivered a quality management and analysis system, providing general practitioners with evidence and feedback on the quality of care they deliver, to 8,300 GP practices covering over 20,000 registered users. Single assessment process technology is already streamlining the way personal details and care information for older people are gathered, stored and shared, so that people need only give their information once and can be certain that it will be shared appropriately by all those professionals involved in their care.

We are currently seeing a considerable acceleration in the deployment of technology across the NHS. Some patients are able to book their hospital appointments electronically. The first electronic prescriptions were issued in February 2005, with numbers set to rise significantly over the coming months. The first NPfIT—delivered picture archiving and communications systems (PACS) went live earlier this year. Around 5,500 GP sites, and 1,500 secondary care sites—some 7000 in total—have already been connected to the new national network (N3), giving fast and reliable broadband access to over 350,000 users. Almost 25,000 clinicians are now registered users of the national care record data 'spine', almost 3,500 of them general practitioners. Over 124,000 users are now registered with Contact, the secure email and directory service for the NHS.

Delivery of new software to support payment by results is on schedule to be implemented in June 2005, and a secondary uses service that will hold anonymised and pseudonymised patient information for research, trend analysis and public health monitoring is being created. In addition, a 'Map of Medicine' software package that gives every clinician access to the overall bank of NHS clinical knowledge at the click of a button has been developed and will be incorporated into systems upgrades.

Altogether, we estimate that something over one and a half million patients have already received improved and safer care as a result of these and other NPfIT development, a figure which is increasing every week.

This represents encouraging progress towards a target of full integration of health and social care systems in England by 2010.

More detailed information, about the national programme and future planned developments can be found on the NHS Connecting for Health website at: www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk

Perinatal Mortality

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to establish targets for primary care trusts on improvements in perinatal mortality. [1475]

Mr. Byrne: There is an existing target on reducing inequalities in infant mortality. It aims at reducing the differences in infant mortality rates between children from different socio-economic groups. We have no plans to add further national targets in this area.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Brazil

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the needs of indigenous peoples in Brazil are not compromised by the destruction of tropical rainforests. [1511]

Mr. Thomas: The UK has committed £16 million to the £186 million multi-donor Pilot Programme for the Preservation of Brazilian Rain Forests. Part of DFID's support is provided through a trust fund managed by the World Bank and part as directly managed projects.

Through the trust fund, the UK has supported the Integrated Project for Protection of Indigenous Peoples and Lands of Legal Amazonia (PPTAL). This project, which started in 1996, helps to validate and register lands claimed by indigenous peoples through physical demarcation within the rain forest so that they can be used and protected by indigenous communities. So far a total of 35 million hectares have been demarcated (the size of the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands).

In addition, DFID supports the Indigenous Peoples Demonstration Projects, another component of the multilateral Pilot Programme for the Preservation of the Brazilian Rain Forests, in partnership with the Ministry of Environment. This programme supports activities that aim at strengthening indigenous peoples' organisations throughout Amazonia to negotiate for and manage better services for their communities. Specifically the programme provides funds and technical assistance to help preserve indigenous cultures, protect indigenous lands against encroachment from outsiders, and provide opportunities for economic development. Indigenous leaders are being trained and supported to promote their rights and entitlements to basic services, and to develop a network among themselves that can strengthen social cohesion in Amazon communities. The programme, also supported by German financial and technical assistance, helps to facilitate these new relationships with central and local governments.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the level of HIV/AIDS in Brazil. [1859]

Mr. Thomas: Brazil has reduced the rate of HIV infections since 1997 and there has been a relative stabilisation of the epidemic has been observed. Current estimates indicate that about 650,000 people in the 15–49 age group of the population are infected. HIV/AIDS is prevalent in all regions of the country but has spread beyond groups at particular risk such as men who have sex with men and injecting drug users. Heterosexual transmission is now responsible for a growing share of HIV infections, with women increasingly affected. Data indicate that risk increases with illiteracy, low levels of education, and poor environments such as urban slums. Although national HIV prevalence among pregnant women has remained stable at below 1 per cent. for the past five years, considerably higher levels—up to 6 per cent.—have been found in some states.

The role of injecting drug use in Brazil's epidemic remains significant. In some areas, drug users constitute at least half of the AIDS cases reported by state Ministries of Health. Harm reduction programmes have been associated with a steep drop in HIV prevalence among injecting drug users in recent years—by 40 per cent. in some cities such as Salvador in the poorer north of the country. In the south of the country, however, rates remain high suggesting that prevention programmes need to continue to target injecting drug users.

The Brazil national AIDS programme has recently stepped up its drive to identify and treat other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), particularly neo-natal syphilis, which will have an important impact in the poorest parts of the country. Brazil's media make a strong contribution to prevention programmes and the recent policy decision to refuse US$24 million of funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) because of conditions attached that would preclude effective working among sex workers demonstrates that Brazil is committed to making universal access achievable.

Progress in containing the epidemic can be attributed to strong policy implementation by the National AIDS Programme and the Ministry of Health in the following ways: Brazil provides universal access to Anti-Retroviral Vaccines (ARVs) that are free of charge; the national AIDS programme supports well-designed and targeted information, education and communication programmes to help prevent infection and support people living with AIDS; there is wide and informed involvement of civil society and faith-based groups; and there is a strong focus on sexual health especially for young people.

Brazil is sharing its expertise (and in some cases ARVs free of charge) with other countries in Latin America, Central America, the Caribbean, and Portuguese-speaking African countries through technical co-operation funded by the Brazilian Government with support from donors such as DFID.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to minimise loss of tropical rainforest in Brazil. [1512]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is one of a number of UK Government Departments that has supported efforts to reduce deforestation of the Brazilian tropical rain forests.

DFID has committed £16 million to the £186 million multi-donor Pilot Programme for the Preservation of Brazilian Rain Forests (PPG7). Through this, DFID has been actively involved in the preparation of a proposal for a law on the management of public forests. If approved and implemented, this law is expected to reduce deforestation significantly.

The one on-going DFID PPG7 project is the Indigenous Peoples Demonstration Project which is enhancing the capacity of indigenous peoples' organisations throughout Amazonia to preserve indigenous cultures, protect indigenous lands against encroachment from outsiders, and to identify and generate opportunities for economic development for a total community of 250,000 indigenous peoples.

DFID has just completed a number of other projects to support the efforts of the Brazilian Government to reduce deforestation of tropical rainforest. These included the testing of new ways to involve local people in managing natural resources and the environment; support for the assessment of the impact that managing the forest has on the genetic diversity of tree species; and helping Brazilian institutes of higher education include subjects that are more relevant to working with poor people whose lives depend on sustainable forests.

DFID is also contributing through multilateral organisations—in particular, by its contribution to the European Commission's Asia Latin America programme which supports projects in the Amazon; and its membership of the World Bank which, for example, approved a $0.5 billion loan last year to promote environmental sustainability in Brazil. DFID is a major contributor to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) that is creating and maintaining protected areas in the Amazon through the Amazon Region Protected Areas Programme (ARPA).

DFID also provides support to civil society organisations involved in forest management in Brazil. DFID's commitment of £800,000 a year for 2005–06 and 2007–08 to the World Wildlife Fund under a Partnership Programme Agreement for Latin America and Caribbean will enhance their work in Brazil.

Future DFID support for efforts to combat deforestation will be through our contributions to multilateral organisations working in the region. Further details of DFID's future role in the region are set out in the document entitled "Regional Assistance Plan for Latin America 2004–2007". I have arranged for copies of this document to be placed in both Libraries of House.

Departmental costs

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the costs of the administration of his Department's offices overseas in the last year for which figures are available. [1590]

Mr. Thomas: The administration costs for DFID offices overseas are as follows:

		£000
	2004–05	*2005–06 plans*
Africa	45,236	50,600
Asia	31,733	32,400
Europe Middle East Americas inc. Iraq	27,414	24,400
UK representation in Rome and Paris	1,076	1,120

Notes:

1. These figures include costs for London and Scotland based staff.
2. Figures for 2004–05 are subject to final outturn

These figures equate to 2 per cent. of the total programme for 2005–06, compared with DFID's ratio of 5 per cent. for total administration to programme allocation.

The administration expenditure plans are consistent with the commitments DFID made in the spending review; increasing growth in Africa and Asia in line with programme expansion and graduating a number of middle-income countries, based in Europe and the Americas, out of bilateral aid programmes thereby releasing more resources in line with DFID's commitment to spend 90 per cent. of it's bilateral programme in low income countries (LICs).

DFID is committed to reducing administration costs over the spending review period in line with the efficiency review recommendations, by focusing on reducing office support costs and improving delivery.

EU (Trade)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many developing countries trade with the EU. [1857]

Mr. Thomas: The EU trades with developing countries under a range of trade arrangements which offer preferential access to its markets. The most comprehensive of these is the Generalised System of Preferences, which covers some 179 countries and overseas/territories. In 2001, the last year for which data are published, the total exports to the EU from these countries was €361 billion.

India

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with the Indian Government regarding AIDS in India; and if he will make a statement. [1858]

Mr. Thomas: On my last visit to India in October 2004, I met both the Minister of State for Health and the Head of the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO). We discussed how best the Department for International Development's assistance to the National AIDS Control Programme could be used and subsequently agreed to extend our support into the highly vulnerable states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The Secretary of State also raised the question of domestic funding to the country's HIV/AIDS programme with the Indian Finance Minister when he visited India in December 2004 and was pleased to note an overall increase.

India has an estimated 5.13 million people living with HIV, second only to South Africa in numbers, although prevalence is low, at 0.92 per cent. The epidemic is concentrated in six high prevalence states (Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh and Nagaland) and is overwhelmingly sexually transmitted.

In India, the Department for International Development supports the Government of India's National AIDS Control Programme with £123 million over seven years to March 2007. DFID's support consists of Financial Aid through the Government for Targeted Interventions with high risk groups in eight focus states: Orissa, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and most recently Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Targeted interventions are specifically designed to reach out to these hard to reach vulnerable groups where the prevalence of disease is highest (sex workers, men having sex with men, injecting drug users etc.) with innovative programmes to contain the spread of the disease.

DFID also provides a package of Technical Cooperation which funds, among other things, a Sexual Health Resource Centre, mass media campaigns by the BBC World Service Trust and condom promotion strategies in the focus states. Funding also goes to the UNAIDS country office.

Last year, DFID India carried out a review of its support to the Government of India's National AIDS Control Programme to ensure that our support could be re-aligned with the current state of the epidemic in India and with new DFID policy, taking account of the UK HIV and AIDS Strategy "Taking Action" which I launched in India during my visit.

UK Presidency (EU)

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what communication activities are planned in relation to the policy areas covered by his Department during the UK Presidency of the EU; and what budget has been allocated for these activities. [1660]

Hilary Benn: DFID has lead responsibility for one Presidency priority, development with a focus on Africa. A number of communication activities have been planned during the Presidency to provide information on work in this area. Those organised by DFID will include a low-key Presidency launch reception at DFID on 30 June, a short information leaflet and activities related to the Development Informal in Leeds on 24–25 October and a World Aids Day event in London on 1 December.

DFID's communication plans for the Presidency, including these events, have been discussed and agreed centrally with Cabinet Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Planning for these events is on-going so a precise figure for communication activities is not yet available.

Zimbabwe

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the World Food Programme ahead of the visit to Zimbabwe by its Director. [1690]

Hilary Benn: DFID officials were in close contact with the World Food Programme (WFP) in Rome, in Harare and with the Regional WFP office in Johannesburg before, during and following the recent visit to the region by James Morris. We expressed concern about what appears likely to become a serious humanitarian situation following recent crop failure in Zimbabwe and have emphasised the need to elicit a clear indication from the Government of Zimbabwe about their need for international assistance, and on what scale. While the political relations between the UK and Zimbabwe governments remain difficult, this would not affect our willingness to provide emergency relief to those in need of humanitarian assistance in Zimbabwe, as long as we are able to do so effectively.

DFID is also assisting the UN to respond to the appalling programme of "urban cleansing" that the Government of Zimbabwe has implemented in recent weeks. They have set up a multi-agency team to provide emergency humanitarian assistance for the estimated 200,000 made homeless, and have strongly condemned the violation of human rights.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what criteria need to be met by the Government of Zimbabwe before the Government will accept a request for assistance with food aid to Zimbabwe. [1821]

Hilary Benn: The Government of Zimbabwe has not asked for international assistance in responding to the recent crop failure. Indeed, President Mugabe has declared that Zimbabwe will import not only 1.2 million metric tonnes (MT) of grain for humanitarian distribution; it will also import 600,000 MT of grain to rebuild the country's strategic reserve. Such imports would more than meet Zimbabwe's food needs. If this situation were to change, the UK would consider a request for humanitarian assistance on the same basis as in other parts of the world—on the basis of humanitarian need, and our ability to provide relief which would reach effectively those in need, without political interference. DFID has been able to do this successfully in Zimbabwe over several years since the on-going humanitarian crisis began in 2001 and would envisage any future UK assistance being provided under the same arrangements.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Common Agricultural Policy

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the 250 largest payments made through the Common Agricultural Policy to farms or enterprises in Northern Ireland for 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* recipients and *(b)* amounts received. [2196]

Angela E. Smith: It has been decided that information should be released on all recipients of agricultural subsidy payments under the Common Agricultural Policy in Northern Ireland. This information is currently in preparation and will be made available on 21 June 2005 on the website of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at www.dardni.gov.uk. The information will be presented on the same basis as that released by the Rural Payments Agency in England on 22 March 2005, and will enable the largest recipients to be identified.

Dementia

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what specific training is provided to doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals in treating and caring for those with dementia. [2232]

Mr. Woodward: Primarily, training in treating and caring for patients with dementia is incorporated into the curricula of undergraduate degree studies for doctors, allied health professions (AHPs) and student nurses studying in the mental health, adult and learning disability training programmes. In addition, there is postgraduate specialised training in dementia care available for nurses, AHPs and other healthcare professionals. It is also addressed in the postgraduate training curriculum for doctors.

Forestry Division

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* terms of reference and *(b)* work programme of the Forestry Division in Northern Ireland are. [2001]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The Forestry Division was renamed the Forest Service in 1975 and became an Executive Agency of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in 1998. Its terms of reference, as stated in its Framework Document, are to deliver the government's policy in forestry through a programme of afforestation, sustainable management of existing forests, production and supply of timber, provision of public recreation and education, and protection and enhancement of the environmental value of forests.

(b) I refer the hon. Gentleman to a written ministerial statement which I made to the House today which contains the Ministerial Key Targets of the Forest Service for 2005–06. Copies of the Agency's Business Plan for the year have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the budget for forest parks in Northern Ireland is in 2005–06, broken down by main budget head; and what staffing costs are estimated to be in 2005–06. [2002]

Angela E. Smith: The budget for the seven Forest Parks is not disaggregated from the total recreation budget for all 109 forests. The total 2005–06 recreation budget and the estimated share of the Forest Parks are shown in the following table by main budget head. It is estimated that income of £655,000 will off-set the total budget shown.

£

	Total recreation budget	*Forest parks budget (estimated)*
Staff costs	779,903	616,531
Materials	65,596	52,390
Local overheads	228,642	183,625
Central overheads	157,478	133,617
Other operating costs	256,401	215,878
Total	1,488,020	1,202,041

Gun Crime

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland of all the recorded gun crime in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years, how many offences were carried out using *(a)* legally and *(b)* illegally held firearms; and if he will make a statement. [2188]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Constable advises that the PSNI's records as held do not differentiate between legally held and illegally held firearms used in the commission of offences.

The following table shows the numbers of offences involving the use of firearms and recorded by offence type for each of the years 2001–02 to 2004–05 inclusive.

Offences recorded, involving the use of firearms, by offence type, in each of the years shown

Offence type	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Class 1: Offences against the person	402	383	307	283
Murder/attempted murder	72	99	29	48
Threat or conspiracy to murder	28	18	18	13
Wounding with intent/GBH with intent	112	118	120	74
Wounding/GBH	39	22	14	18
AOABH/aggravated assault/common assault	66	44	65	66
Intimidation	40	46	42	40
Firearms offences endangering life	43	35	19	24
Other offences against the person	2	1	0	0
Class 2: Sexual offences	2	0	0	0
Class 3: Burglary	10	14	10	13
Class 4: Robbery	609	679	484	325
Business robbery	494	564	384	259
Personal robbery	77	66	62	47
Hijacking	38	49	38	19
Class 5: Theft	0	0	1	1
Class 6: Fraud and forgery	0	0	0	0
Class 7: Criminal damage	136	86	191	236

Offences recorded, involving the use of firearms, by offence type, in each of the years shown

Offence type	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Class 8: Offences against the state	22	24	12	35
Firearms offences	19	20	11	35
Other offences against the state	3	4	1	0
Class 9: Other notifiable offences	12	6	7	7
Total offences	1,193	1,192	1,012	900

Notes:

1. These figures relate to offences where a firearm was involved in the incident—it is not known how the firearm was actually used.
2. Included within the firearm category are handguns, shotguns, rifles, air guns and imitation firearms.

Source:

Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* injuries and *(b)* fatalities associated with air guns have occurred in each district police command area in each year since their formation; and what prosecutions have occurred as a result. [2266]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Constable advises that the PSNI does not hold the information in the form requested. However, he has provided three separate statistical tables (covering the years 2001–02 to 2004–05 inclusive) which show *(a)* offences involving air guns recorded by district police command units; *(b)* violent offences involving air guns recorded by district police command unit; and *(c)* offences involving air guns cleared by the police.

(A) Offences recorded by the police where an air gun was involved in the incident[1]*—Overall crime*

District Command Unit	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Antrim	3	3	5	8
Ards	7	12	16	16
Armagh	0	2	0	2
Banbridge	2	1	1	5
East Belfast	12	4	10	11
North Belfast	4	3	7	12
South Belfast	1	5	3	1
West Belfast	8	3	42	21
Ballymena	10	2	1	2
Ballymoney	1	0	0	1
Carrickfergus	9	2	18	19
Coleraine	2	3	8	18
Cookstown	1	0	3	1
Craigavon	10	3	6	31
Castlereagh	18	4	5	2
Dungannon and South Tyrone	1	1	4	1
Down	4	1	7	14
Fermanagh	2	2	0	1
Foyle	1	0	1	13
Larne	10	0	4	19
Limavady	1	1	9	16
Lisburn	10	5	1	5
Magherafelt	2	1	0	3
Moyle	0	0	1	1
Newtownabbey	2	12	17	26
North Down	5	3	5	10
Newry and Mourne	14	11	6	13
Omagh	2	3	3	9
Strabane	0	3	3	2

(A) Offences recorded by the police where an air gun was involved in the incident[1]*—Overall crime*

District Command Unit	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Northern Ireland	142	90	186	283

[1] These figures relate to offences where an air gun was involved in the incident—it is not known how the air gun was actually used.

Source:

Central Statistics Unit, PSNI.

(B) Offences recorded by the police where an air gun was involved in the incident[1]*—Violent crime (offences against the person, sexual offences and robbery)*

District Command Unit	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Antrim	2	2	2	4
Ards	2	0	4	3
Armagh	0	0	0	1
Banbridge	0	0	0	0
East Belfast	2	1	1	5
North Belfast	0	3	1	4
South Belfast	1	1	0	1
West Belfast	3	1	3	0
Ballymena	3	0	0	1
Ballymoney	0	0	0	1
Carrickfergus	3	1	1	3
Coleraine	1	0	2	4
Cookstown	1	0	1	1
Craigavon	1	2	3	9
Castlereagh	3	2	2	1
Dungannon and South Tyrone	0	1	0	0
Down	1	1	3	1
Fermanagh	1	2	0	0
Foyle	0	0	0	3
Larne	2	0	1	4
Limavady	0	0	1	2
Lisburn	3	2	1	1
Magherafelt	0	0	0	2
Moyle	0	0	1	0
Newtownabbey	0	2	5	4
North Down	1	1	0	3
Newry and Mourne	4	2	1	2
Omagh	1	2	1	2
Strabane	0	0	0	1
Northern Ireland	35	26	34	63

[1] These figures relate to offences where an air gun was involved in the incident—it is not known how the air gun was actually used.

Source:

Central Statistics Unit, PSNI.

(C) Offences cleared by the police where an air gun was involved in the incident[1]*—Overall crime by method of clearance*

District Command Unit	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Charge/summons	5	1	7	8
Adult caution/informed warning	2	3	1	2
Juvenile restorative caution/informed warning	4	4	4	10
Offender under age	0	1	1	7

(C) Offences cleared by the police where an air gun was involved in the incident[1]—Overall crime by method of clearance

District Command Unit	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Complainant declined to prosecute	12	7	12	22
DCU commander/DPP/PPS direct no prosecution	3	1	1	6
Otherwise disposed of	0	0	0	1
Total	26	17	26	56

[1] These figures relate to offences where an air gun was involved in the incident—it is not known how the air gun was actually used.

Note:

Of the 701 crimes recorded during the last four years, 125 have been cleared.

Source:

Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

Incapacity Benefit

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average length of time taken to process appeals against a decision of non-entitlement to incapacity benefit was in the last year for which figures are available. [2228]

Mr. Hanson: In the 2004–05 financial year, the average time taken to process an appeal (i.e. from receipt of appeal by the Social Security Agency to the date the decision is released to the claimant) was 23 weeks.

Pensioner Bonus

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the £200 bonus to pensioners to assist with payment of the council tax will be made available to pensioners in Northern Ireland to assist with the payment of local rate bills. [1741]

Mr. Hanson: This year the Government are making a one-off tax free, lump sum payment of £200 to all eligible households with someone aged 65 or over towards council tax bills. As Northern Ireland does not have council tax, the payment is intended to provide extra help with rates.

Pre-school Education Advisory Group

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Pre-School Education Advisory Group places were allocated to *(a)* Killeeshill playgroup, *(b)* Gallally playgroup, *(c)* An Tearmann playgroup and *(d)* Little Acorns playgroup in the Southern Education and Library Board area in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [1742]

Angela E. Smith: The number of places allocated to the groups for the 2003–04 and 2004–05 academic years were:

	2003–04	*2004–05*
Panda Cross Community Playgroup, Killeeshill Community Centre, Dungannon	16	20
Paddington Playgroup, Gallally, Dungannon	19	22
An Tearmann Early Years Project, Coalisland, Dungannon	9	11
Little Acorns Playgroup, Laghey Primary School, Dungannon	10	10

At the end of the admissions process the Southern Education and Library Board's Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG) recovered places from undersubscribed groups and re-allocated them to groups who had been over-subscribed with application for funded places.

As a result of this exercise the actual number of funded pre-school places which the groups were in receipt of in September 2003 and September 2004 was as follows:

	September	
	2003	*2004*
Panda Cross Community Playgroup, Killeeshill Community Centre, Dungannon	29	28
Paddington Playgroup, Gallally, Dungannon,	24	24
An Tearmann Early Years Project, Coalisland, Dungannon	6	12
Little Acorns Playgroup, Laghey Primary School, Dungannon	16	9

Royal Ulster Constabulary

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people *(a)* retired from and *(b)* were medically retired from the then Royal Ulster Constabulary in 2001; what the (i) average age and (ii) average length of service of those retirees was; and if he will list the equivalent figures so far for 2005 from the Police Service of Northern Ireland. [2180]

Mr. Woodward: The following tables set out the information requested by the hon. Lady:

Leaver data: Royal Ulster Constabulary 2001

	Number
RUC Regular:	
Medical retirements	135
Voluntary severance	1022
Other reasons	25
Total retirees	1182
Average age	51.9
Average service	28.3
RUC Full-time Reserve	
Medical retirements	38
Voluntary severance	129
Other reasons	49
Total retirees	316
Average age	48.9
Average service	17.6

Leaver data: Police Service of Northern Ireland 2005 to date

PSNI Regular:	*Number*
Medical retirements	19
Voluntary severance	133
Other reasons	22
Total retirees	174
Average age	48.3
Average service	24.5
PSNI Full-time Reserve	
Medical retirements	31
Voluntary severance	12
Other reasons	[1]123
Total retirees	166
Average age	48.9
Average service	17.8

[1] This figure includes 105 Officers who left under the Full Time Reserve Severance Scheme, which was introduced on 1 April 2005.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will answer the letter to him dated 3 March 2005 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mrs. Z. Khanum. [2132]

Dr. Howells: I refer my right. hon. Friend to the reply I gave him on 24 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 65W.

The Foreign Secretary replied to my right hon. Friend's letter with regard to Mrs. Z. Khanum on 14 March 2005.

Egypt

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received from his Department's officials on changes to the constitution in Egypt requiring potential candidates for the presidency to be supported by 300 elected officials from both Houses of Parliament and local councils; what representations have been made by his Department to the Egyptian Government on the matter; and if he will make a statement. [2057]

Dr. Howells: We welcomed President Mubarak's proposal on 28 February 2005 for a change to the Egyptian constitution, with the stated aim of enabling direct election of the President from multiple candidates. On 10 May 2005, the People's Assembly voted in favour of the amendment, as did the Egyptian people in a referendum on 25 May 2005.

In future elections, after 2005, legal political parties may nominate a member of their central committee as a presidential candidate. The nominating party must have been in existence for at least five years; the party nominee must have held the same position on the board for at least one year; and the party must hold at least 5 per cent. of the seats in both the People's Assembly and the Shura Council. Independent candidates who are not members of legal political parties must have the support of at least 250 elected members of the People's Assembly, Shura Council and local councils.

The UK, through our embassy in Cairo, works closely with the Egyptians to promote political reform. Through the development of the EU neighbourhood policy, we are encouraging a greater focus on supporting democracy, governance and human rights in Egypt.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent killing of internally-displaced people in the Soba Aradi camp in Khartoum; and what measures are being taken by *(a)* the Government and *(b)* international agencies to (i) protect the human rights of internally-displaced people in Khartoum and (ii) prevent their forcible relocation. [1640]

Ian Pearson: I refer my hon. Friend to the replies I gave him on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 238W and 7 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 384W.

Zimbabwe

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to the Government of Zimbabwe concerning the recent arrests of street traders in *(a)* Harare and *(b)* other Zimbabwean cities; and if he will make a statement; [2028]

(2) when his officials were first informed of the recent arrests of street traders in *(a)* Harare and *(b)* other Zimbabwean cities; and if he will make a statement; [2031]

(3) what discussions he has held with his European Union partners concerning the recent arrests of street traders in *(a)* Harare and *(b)* other Zimbabwean cities; and if he will make a statement; [2032]

(4) if he will make representations to the Zimbabwean Government on operation drive out rubbish; and if he will make a statement; [2033]

(5) if he will make representations to the South African Government on operation drive out rubbish in Zimbabwe; and if he will make a statement; [2034]

(6) if he will hold discussions with his European Union partners on operation drive out rubbish in Zimbabwe; and if he will make a statement; [2035]

(7) what discussions he has held with African countries on operation drive out rubbish in Zimbabwe; and if he will make a statement; [2036]

(8) when his officials were first informed of *(a)* operation drive out rubbish and *(b)* other attempts by the Zimbabwean Government to demolish homes which it deemed unauthorised; [2038]

(9) if he will make representations to the Government of South Africa concerning the recent arrests of street traders in *(a)* Harare and *(b)* other Zimbabwean cities; and if he will make a statement. [2039]

Ian Pearson: We have been following closely and with concern developments since operation drive out rubbish began recently, including informal sector housing and traders. We condemn the wholesale and callous destruction of people's homes and livelihoods caused by the security forces in urban areas across Zimbabwe as part of a "clean up" campaign. The Government of Zimbabwe's own figures indicate that nearly 23,000 people have been arrested since the operation began and many thousands rendered homeless. This has inflicted even greater hardship and suffering on the innocent and needy who are being punished for the regime's failed policies.

Department for International Development funds are being used in provision of immediate assistance to affected households who do not have the capacity to absorb the shock themselves (particularly children and the chronically ill). We are pressing the UN to take a lead in assessing the extent and impact of the regime's operation, and the scope for international assistance to those who are in immediate humanitarian need.

We understand that the UN's world food programme Director, James Morris, raised the issue with Mugabe on 1 June.

We regularly press the Government of Zimbabwe on our human rights concerns, of which this is only the latest example. We also maintain a dialogue with key African states on Zimbabwe focusing on key developments of concern such as this. We are also discussing a response with our EU partners.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Zimbabwe on land reform in Zimbabwe; and if he will make a statement. [2029]

Ian Pearson: We have consistently said that we would support a land reform programme that was transparent, fair and legal and that was carried out within a wider Zimbabwean Government programme to reduce poverty. The United Nations development programme agrees that the Government of Zimbabwe's fast track programme is inconsistent with these principles. Concerns about land seizures are just one of the areas of concern we raise regularly with the Government of Zimbabwe, both bilaterally and with our international partners.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Disability Benefits

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many drug addicts in Bassetlaw are receiving incapacity benefit. [144]

Mrs. McGuire: As at November 2004, there were 200 incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants in Bassetlaw, whose primary diagnosis was recorded as drug abuse.

We want to make sure that everyone in society has the opportunity to enter into employment including drug misusers. The Progress2work (p2w) initiative which helps recovering drugs misusers into work has now been rolled out across Jobcentre Plus. Progress2work help includes specialist support to help people through mainstream programmes and provision for intensive measures to help those overcoming very serious problems.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people who have made claims for incapacity benefit are receiving credits towards their pension entitlement and not cash; and if he will make a statement. [961]

Mrs. McGuire: As at November 2004, there were 929,400 incapacity benefit claimants receiving national insurance credits only. However, 787,100 of these received income support. Some of the remaining 142,300 will also be in receipt of other, non income-related, benefits.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people had been claiming incapacity or invalidity benefit for *(a)* up to one year, *(b)* one to two years, *(c)* two to three years, *(d)* three to four years, *(e)* four to five years, *(f)* five to 10 years, *(g)* 10 to 15 years and *(h)* 15 years and over in each of the last 30 years. [2159]

Mrs. McGuire: No information is available prior to 1982. The most recent available information is for 2002. The available information is in the following table.

Invalidity benefit (IVB) and incapacity benefit (IB) recipients by duration of claim in Great Britain for years shown

thousand

Year ending	*All durations*	*Up to one year*	*One to two years*	*Two to three years*	*Three to four years*	*Four to five years*	*Five to 10 years*	*10 to 15 years*	*15 years and over*
Invalidity benefit									
29 May 1982	683.5	26.7	126.5	86.9	72.6	60.1	150.7	41.7	33.2
2 April 1983	736.9	117.6	135.0	101.3	72.9	65.9	163.9	45.8	34.5
31 March 1984	797.4	116.0	146.5	113.2	87.6	63.0	187.9	48.0	35.2
30 March 1985[1]	849.3	185.2	130.9	109.5	89.4	[1]113.5	[1]135.7	[1]85.1	[1]n/a
5 April 1986[2]	899.4	[2]n/a	[2]n/a	[2]n/a	[2]n/a	[2]n/a	[2]n/a	[2]n/a	[2]n/a
4 April 1987	968.0	131.3	154.1	116.1	106.5	94.2	249.9	74.0	41.9
2 April 1988	1,047.5	148.6	150.3	131.4	102.9	98.1	283.4	88.3	44.5
1 April 1989	1,126.1	154.0	168.5	130.8	118.6	92.9	314.0	99.0	48.3
31 March 1990	1,209.4	162.0	173.3	146.8	1.19.7	108.7	337.4	106.5	55.0
30 March 1991	1,306.3	167.5	189.5	150.2	136.3	112.8	367.1	122.5	60.4
4 April 1992	1,439.1	199.1	204.4	170.2	140.3	130.2	389.2	137.6	68.1
3 April 1993	1,580.3	202.7	246.5	184.9	161.3	132.4	423.8	153.1	75.6

Invalidity benefit (IVB) and incapacity benefit (IB) recipients by duration of claim in Great Britain for years shown

thousand

Year ending	*All durations*	*Up to one year*	*One to two years*	*Two to three years*	*Three to four years*	*Four to five years*	*Five to 10 years*	*10 to 15 years*	*15 years and over*
2 April 1994	1,681.3	291.6	236.3	195.7	153.9	143.8	432.1	151.1	76.8
12 April 1995	1,767.2	283.5	241.8	207.3	184.0	141.8	462.8	164.8	81.2
Incapacity benefit									
31 March 1996[3]	1,761.7	141.5	230.4	[3]n/a	[3]n/a	[4]602.9	501.2	186.7	99.0
31 March 1997	1,667.4	155.0	169.6	194.0	176.4	330.3	355.9	182.3	103.9
31 March 1998	1,614.8	149.4	181.3	141.1	169.4	313.8	368.3	187.1	104.4
31 March 1999	1,512.4	127.5	155.9	148.4	121.7	286.2	387.6	177.0	108.1
31 March 2000	1,416.7	121.2	135.7	127.9	129.5	236.8	380.7	175.9	109.0
31 March 2001	1,471.6	147.4	153.8	128.2	115.5	214.7	399.7	194.5	117.8
31 March 2002	1,454.1	142.3	153.7	126.2	110.2	206.3	368.8	220.4	126.2

Notes:

1. Figures are shown in thousands and rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. Some historical tables have slightly different duration lengths:

[1] For period ending 30 March 1985, the figure shown in the column 'four to five years' is actually for the duration of four to six years. The figure in the 'five to 10 years' column is actually for six to 10 years. Also the figure for '10 to 15 years' is that for 10 years and over.

[2] A breakdown of the figures for period ending 5 April 1986 is not available.

[3] For period ending 31 March 1996, the figure shown in the column 'four to five years' is actually for the duration of two to five years.

[4] Invalidity benefit was replaced by incapacity benefit in April 1995.

3. Figures marked with "n/a" are not available.

Source:

Information Directorate, 1 per cent. Samples.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many representations he has received regarding the eligibility of pension schemes which were wound up after May 2004 and before April 2005 for the Financial Assistance Scheme, broken down by scheme; and what response he made to the representations. [1842]

Mr. Timms: We have received a number of representations over the last year about pension schemes that started to wind up between May 2004 and April 2005. A separate breakdown of the representations about individual schemes is not available. In the light of the representations we announced in November 2004 that, provided they meet the other eligibility criteria, members of pension schemes with insolvent employers that started to wind up between those dates would receive help from the scheme.

Local Housing Allowance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average rent was in each of the local reference rent localities within the local housing allowance pilot areas in each month in the last two years. [920]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested. The available information is in the table.

Average rent for those in receipt of the local housing allowance by Pathfinder local authority

£

	Quarter ending		
	August 2004	*November 2004*	*February 2005*
Blackpool	n/a	90	90
Brighton and Hove	120	121	122
Conwy	78	78	79
Coventry	85	86	87
Edinburgh	101	102	103
Leeds	n/a	81	81
Lewisham	127	135	137
North East Lincolnshire	n/a	n/a	75
Teignbridge	90	93	92

n/a = Not available

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest £1.

2. Data are not available for some local authorities for some quarters due to concerns about data quality.

Source:

Local Authority Management Information data.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average length of time taken to process housing benefit applications in the local housing allowance pilot areas has been; and if he will make a statement. [921]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Pathfinder local authorities (LAs) are subject to a comprehensive, robust evaluation programme which will include an assessment of the impact of local housing allowance (LHA) on processing times.

Although it is too early to draw firm conclusions regarding the impact of LHA on processing times, early indications from Pathfinder LAs and local stakeholders is that processing times are reducing.

Mobility Cars

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether publicly-funded mobility cars may be provided for people over the age of 65 years; and if he will make a statement. [1871]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* Severely disabled people who claimed and qualified for the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance before reaching age 65 may continue to receive it after that age if they continue to meet the conditions of entitlement. If they choose to do so, they can use it to obtain a vehicle through the Motability scheme. Disability living allowance is focused on providing extra financial help to people who are severely disabled early, or relatively early, in life and as a result may have less opportunity to work and save. It is not available to people who become disabled after reaching age 65. However, attendance allowance provides them with well targeted help with their disability-related extra costs and helps maintain their independence. It is a tax-free, non-contributory benefit which is not income-related and is currently worth up to £60.60 per week. It is part of the wide range of help that the Government makes available to older people.

Pensions

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people *(a)* started claiming the state retirement pension, *(b)* were refused full state pension entitlement because they claimed the pension outside the time limit, *(c)* appealed against the decision to refuse them full state pension because they had claimed the pension outside the time limits and *(d)* were successful in their appeals in each year since 1997. [1679]

Mr. Timms: The number of claimants wishing to claim state pension from a date earlier than the statutory period of three months is not routinely collected. Information on the number of people appealing against the disallowance of a late claim is not available. The scope for a successful appeal is limited, given that the prescribed time for claiming is absolute. Under current legislation the time limit cannot be extended on the grounds of, for instance, good cause.

The Government have however introduced legislation which is extending the prescribed time for claiming state pension from three months to 12 months. The change is being introduced gradually over the course of this financial year so that, by April 2006, pensioners will be able to have their state pension entitlement—other than any increase for an adult dependant—backdated for a full 12 months if they so wish.

A person who delays claiming their state pension, deliberately or otherwise, is treated as having deferred their entitlement. As a result, they could be eligible for a higher weekly pension when they do finally claim. Alternatively, if they delay their entitlement for at least 12 months from April 2005 they will have the option of a one-off taxable lump sum payment, based on deferred pension plus interest, instead of a pension increase.

Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will bring forward further measures to restore pensions lost through scheme wind-ups. [1776]

Mr. Timms: The Government have introduced a number of measures that directly address the reduction in pension that individuals can face when their scheme winds-up with insufficient funds. The Government have:

Introduced the Financial Assistance Scheme which will help those most seriously affected by pension scheme failures before the PPF was established;

Introduced the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) which is an historic step forward in protecting scheme members. It will, for the first time, pay compensation to members of eligible defined benefit and hybrid occupational pension schemes when there is a qualifying insolvency event in relation to the employer and where there are insufficient assets in the pension scheme to cover PPF levels of compensation;

Introduced a new statutory priority order when the PPF started up for business on 6 April 2005. The new priority order applies to schemes which commence winding up on or after that date. It ensures that members of schemes wound up due to employer insolvency, with sufficient funds to meet more than the benefits guaranteed by the PPF, do not find themselves in a worse position than if the scheme had less funds and was covered by the PPF; and

Introduced legislation that increases the debt on the employer to the 'full buy-out' level, as we believe that wherever possible employers should ensure that there are sufficient funds in schemes which are winding up to meet the full costs of the rights accrued by scheme members.

It is also important to take action before schemes reach this point. The Government have established the Pensions Regulator (the Regulator) which replaced the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (Opra) on 6 April 2005. The Regulator will take a proactive and risk-based approach to regulation and, in addition to the powers inherited from Opra, will have a range of new and increased powers to protect members of work-based pension schemes. The Regulator will concentrate its resources where there is the greatest risk to the security of members' benefits.

The Government fully understands, and shares the concerns of those people whose pensions are affected when their scheme is wound up. The measures we have introduced ensure that trustees and employers have clear obligations and incentives to protect members' benefits. The Government will continue to review the situation.

Pensioners Living Abroad

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set up a review of the policy of paying state pensions to UK citizens living abroad in some countries and not to others; and if he will make a statement. [2096]

Mr. Timms: We have no plans to do so.

Pensioner Poverty

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners were living in *(a)* absolute and *(b)* relative poverty in each year since 1979–80; and if he will make a statement. [973]

Mr. Timms: The sixth annual 'Opportunity for all' report (Cm 6239) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of measures.

There is no fully consistent time series using a single data source for the number of pensioners below absolute low income thresholds since 1979.

The following table gives the number of pensioners living in relative low income since 1979 and the number in absolute low income against the standard 1996–97 baseline from 1996–97 onwards. Absolute low income is defined as below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income held constant in real terms and relative low income is defined as below 60 per cent. of contemporary median income.

	Income below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income held constant in real terms		*Income below 60 per cent. of contemporary median income*	
	Housing costs		*Housing costs*	
	After	*Before*	*After*	*Before*
Family Expenditure Survey (UK)[1]				
1979	—	—	2.6	2.5
1981	—	—	1.9	1.5
1987	—	—	2.7	2.4
1988–89	—	—	3.8	3.3
1990–91	—	—	3.6	3.3
1991–92	—	—	3.3	2.9
1992–93	—	—	3.0	2.5
1993–94	—	—	2.8	2.2
Family Resources Survey (GB)1				
1994–95	3.1	2.5	2.7	2.1
1995–96	3.1	2.5	2.8	2.2
1996–97	2.8	2.2	2.8	2.2
1997–98	2.6	2.2	2.7	2.3
1998–99	2.4	2.1	2.7	2.4
1999–2000	2.0	1.9	2.6	2.3
2000–01	1.6	1.6	2.5	2.2
2001–02	1.2	1.5	2.3	2.3
2002–03	1.0	1.2	2.3	2.3
2003–04	0.9	1.1	2.0	2.2

[1] Source

Note:

1. Table shows number of pensioners in millions.
2. The reference period for FRS figures is single financial years.
3. FES figures are single calendar years from 1979–87, two combined calendar years from 1988–89 to 1990–91 are two financial years combined from 1991–92 to 1995–96.

Source:

Households Below Average Income 2003–04

Further information showing the proportion and number of pensioners living in low income households, including annual levels, can be found in the publication "Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2003–04", a copy of which can be found in the House of Commons Library. This also reports statistics between 1979 and 1995–96, using the data source and income definitions previously employed for the 'Households Below Average Income' series.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Child Care

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans the Government have to involve private and voluntary sector day nurseries in *(a)* children's centres and *(b)* extended schools. [1811]

Beverley Hughes: The Government greatly values the contribution made by the thousands of private and voluntary nurseries, playgroups and pre-schools to early education and child care. We are determined that these sectors should continue to play a full part in the provision of early years education and child care as these services are expanded. The day nursery sector now cares for more children aged under five than any other type of child care with the vast majority of day nurseries in the private sector (85 per cent.). 24 per cent. of all day nurseries are in the 20 per cent. most disadvantaged areas and over 60 per cent. of all neighbourhood nurseries were successfully delivered by the private sector.

Responsibility for the strategic planning of location of children's centres lies with local authorities. Stakeholders including private and voluntary day nurseries are key to the development of current and future children's centres. Providers are regularly invited to work with local authorities in the process of identifying current needs as well as developing plans for existing and future involvement. Local authorities are expected to take advantage of the expertise that many private and voluntary sector providers offer.

Following the Children Act 2004, local authorities are working with key partners as part of children's trust arrangements to plan and commission services strategically. They are encouraged to work with private and other providers to assess current levels of child care availability as well as likely future requirements of the community. Many schools are expected to develop the core offer of extended services by working in partnership with existing local private or voluntary sector providers.

Deaf Pupils

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what research she has commissioned on the effects of matching teaching methods to the degree of deafness on the academic achievements of deaf and hard of hearing pupils; [2071]

(2) what research she has commissioned on academic achievements of deaf and hard of hearing pupils in *(a)* mainstream schools and *(b)* special schools and units. [2072]

Beverley Hughes: In 2003 the Department commissioned Cambridge and Manchester universities to carry out a joint study of teaching approaches for different types of special educational needs (SEN). The study found a large degree of overlap between different approaches—in essence, good teaching skills are much the same for all pupils, regardless of whether or not they have SEN, or the type of SEN.

That study did not include a detailed assessment of the effectiveness of different specialised approaches in teaching children with hearing impairment. We are considering what further work might be undertaken in that area.

From 2004 the Department has—as part of the Annual School Census—collected information on the type of Special Educational Need of individual pupils. This enables us to monitor the progress of pupils with different types of SEN, including those with hearing impairments, in various settings.

As with other categories of special need, it is important that parents of children with hearing impairment feel supported. The Department's Early Support Programme has published an information booklet for parents on hearing impairment. The Programme has also produced a monitoring protocol for deaf babies and children. This is designed to help families and professionals document the progress of children in the first three years or so after deafness has been identified.

Extended Schools

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will require extended schools to make facilities available to supplementary schools in their community free of charge upon request; and if she will make a statement. [1854]

Beverley Hughes: My Department recognises the contribution, over a great number of years, that many communities make towards the education of our children, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, through supplementary school initiatives.

We encourage mainstream and supplementary schools to work together to share experiences, expertise and resources. There are many positive examples of collaboration, including schools that make their facilities available free of charge or for a 'peppercorn' rent.

The Department also encourages schools to use funding received through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant to support the development of partnerships with supplementary schools.

We want all schools to develop a core offer of extended services by 2010, to include child care, study support, parenting support, family and adult learning and community use of school premises, all of which can clearly link with the supplementary schools agenda. It will be for schools, working with key partners and in consultation with other key stakeholders, including parents and local communities, to decide what services they should offer. This will be based on a range of factors including the school's capacity to offer services; the need for particular services; and what already exists in the local community. From 2005–06 all local authorities are receiving funding to support the development of extended services in their schools.

Looked-after Children

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what support her Department will provide to local authorities to support them in their duty under the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children. [2319]

Maria Eagle: The Department is publicly consulting on statutory guidance which sets out what local authorities need to do to fulfil their duty to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children. We are also continuing to fund our 10 regional education protects networks to play a key role in sharing and disseminating good practice as local authorities implement the statutory guidance. In addition to mainstream funding for children's services, since 2003–04 we have provided local authorities with £42 million each year through the vulnerable children grant in order to improve access to education for vulnerable children, including looked-after children.

Mobile Phones (Children)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance has been issued by her Department to schools in relation to mobile phone use by children. [2203]

Jacqui Smith: When the original report of the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (IEGMP)—known as the Stewart Report—was published in 2000 we informed all schools that it was available. Schools were also told that the Department of Health leaflet 'Mobile Phones and Health' was available, and we drew their attention to the paragraphs relating to children and young people under 16. Our guidance on Teachernet states that schools, in drawing up health and safety policies, may wish to take into account advice from the UK chief medical officers that where children and young people do use mobile phones, they should be encouraged to:

(a) use mobile phones for essential purposes only;

(b) keep all calls short because talking for long periods prolongs exposure to radiation.

Psychopathic Tendencies (Children)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has conducted into children with early psychopathic tendencies and their predisposition to antisocial behaviour. [2312]

Mr. Byrne: I have been asked to reply.

The Department, the Home Office and the Medical Research Council have jointly funded a large-scale research study of twins looking at the aetiology and developmental pathways of psychopathic tendencies in children.

This research found that in children with psychopathic tendencies, antisocial behaviour appeared to be strongly inherited. In contrast, the antisocial behaviour of children who did not have psychopathic tendencies was mainly influenced by environmental factors. These findings suggest that psychopathic tendencies may have a large heritable component. However, environmental factors are still important and early intervention may ameliorate the impact of these traits in later life.

The Department has also produced an expert paper entitled "Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD): Children and Adolescents" which explores the scope for preventing ASPD by intervening in adolescence. This can be found on the website of the National Forensic Mental Health Research and Development Programme at www.nfmhp.org.uk.

The following associated research is currently being undertaken:

An evaluation of a pilot intervention (aimed at children and parents) for hard to reach children with conduct disorder.

A longitudinal study of children given the diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder to identify the prevalence of, and clinical, genetic and environmental risk factors for ASPD in adolescence.

A review of case files from the young abusers project to explore the links between juvenile sexual offending and severe personality disorder.

Registered Foster Carers

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made in identifying and resolving collection difficulties to enable the Government to work towards the collection of data relating to the number of registered foster carers. [2200]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* Work to identify and resolve data collection difficulties is ongoing. It is planned to undertake fieldwork involving a sample of 10 local authorities in order to explore fully the range of relevant issues, to enable the development of an informative and workable data collection process. This fieldwork is expected to be completed by the end of 2005.

Schools (Hertfordshire)

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she will take to assist parents who fail to get their children into any of their chosen schools in Hertfordshire; and if she will make a statement. [779]

Jacqui Smith: Where a school is oversubscribed, it naturally follows that not every parent will be able to have their preference met. Parents who fail to secure a place at any of their preferred schools will be offered an alternative place; usually the nearest school to their home with places available. Parents should be able to make informed decisions on the likelihood of being able to secure a place at their preferred school and all local authorities already publish information for parents to help them do so. However, we would expect local authorities to continue looking at ways in which parents could be better informed.

Sue Blackwell

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she has met Sue Blackwell of Birmingham university in an official capacity. [2021]

Maria Eagle: I have not met with Sue Blackwell of Birmingham university in an official capacity.

Sure Start

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding her Department is providing for the National SureStart Month 2005. [2309]

Beverley Hughes: The Department is contributing up to £366,386 towards National SureStart Month 2005. This figure includes: website development and maintenance, media and activities telephone helpline to support practitioners in their planning, design, print and distribution of all materials, media and promotional work, launch event and research.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 9 June 2005

WALES

Council Tax Subsidy

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what balancing adjustments have been made to reflect changes in the cost of council tax subsidy for Wales in each year since 1997. [1283]

Mr. Hain: The following council tax benefit adjustments have been made to the Wales departmental expenditure limit.

A reduction of £0.56 million in 2001–02 in respect of 2000–01, and an increase of £1.957 million in 2003–04 in respect of 2001–02 and 2002–03 net of rate relief adjustment.

Ministerial Duties

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many hours he spent on ministerial duties during the week commencing Monday 9 May 2005 in his capacity as *(a)* Secretary of State for Wales and *(b)* Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. [1151]

Mr. Hain: I have spent as much time as is necessary to fulfil my responsibilities as Secretary of State for Wales and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, including spending the same proportion of time in Wales as has been the case previously.

Ministerial Visits (Public Funds)

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he used public funds to attend the Monaco Grand Prix. [1534]

Mr. Hain: No.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

UK Presidency (EU)

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what communication activities are planned in relation to the policy areas covered by her Department during the UK Presidency of the EU; and what budget has been allocated for these activities. [1659]

Tessa Jowell: External communications activities for the UK presidency of the EU are being co-ordinated centrally by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Any communication activities planned by my Department are an integral part of preparations for events related to the conduct of the residency, such as events on broadcasting, intellectual property and sport planned for the period of the presidency. I have no proposals for communication activities separate from these events, and therefore no specific budget provision has been made.

TRANSPORT

Air Transport (Public Subsidies)

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total amount of public subsidy given to passenger air services was in the United Kingdom in the last financial year. [2332]

Ms Buck: The total amount of subsidy for passenger air services in the UK in the last financial year was £2,320,720. All of this was in support of lifeline air services in Scotland and was provided either by the Scottish Executive or the Islands Councils.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what restrictions his Department applies to the use of public subsidy to support air transport services in the United Kingdom. [2348]

Ms Buck: The Department only authorises subsidy of air transport services through the use of Public Service Obligations (PSOs). The imposition of PSOs is governed by European legislation laid out in Regulation 2408/92. This Regulation sets out a number of criteria which must be met in order for a PSO to be imposed.

The Department would consider any PSO application it received against these criteria and the Secretary of State for Transport will then decide whether to impose a PSO on that route.

Air Travel (Consumer Protection)

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to impose a levy on outbound UK air passengers, in the form proposed by the Civil Aviation Authority, to fund a consumer protection regime. [2165]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 8 June 2005]:* The Department is considering the Civil Aviation Authority's economic analysis and assessment of the likely regulatory impact of a range of options for the future financial protection of air travellers.

Drink-driving

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Government have any plans to implement random breath-testing of drivers. [2404]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government have no plans to introduce random breath-testing of drivers.

The police may test any driver involved in a road traffic collision and aim to test all drivers at injury collisions they attend. They may also test any driver they consider to have committed a moving traffic offence or where there is any suspicion of alcohol consumption.

These are broad powers and we believe they are sufficient to enable the police to deal with drink-drive offenders.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to bring the drink-drive limit in the UK into line with those of other EU member states. [2465]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no plans at present to reduce the legal alcohol limit for drivers to bring this country into line with other EU member states. The Government's priority for reducing drink-related crashes and casualties is through effective enforcement of existing controls and national publicity campaigns.

North London Line

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effect of noise vibrations from trains on the North London Line on residential properties; and if he will make a statement. [2505]

Derek Twigg: Measures to mitigate the effects of noise vibration from trains are a matter for the railway industry. In response to concerns raised by residents who live near the North London Line, Network Rail has undertaken to carry out a number of measures to reduce noise vibration on this line. This will include carrying out grinding and joint removal work to improve the track surface. Network Rail will also look at a number of potential contributory factors in the area, including the speed of trains and local environmental conditions and will continue to engage in discussions with freight operators and the local authority to keep them advised of any relevant findings.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many trains operate between midnight and 7 am on the North London Line. [2532]

Derek Twigg: An average of 86 trains operate between midnight and 7 am on weekdays on the North London Line.

Road Traffic Accidents

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his strategy is for reducing the number of deaths in road traffic accidents. [3591]

Dr. Ladyman: We continue to develop and implement our wide-ranging road safety strategy. The provisional 2004 casualty figures show we are now over halfway towards our 2010 target of a 40 per cent. reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured, and over three-quarters towards our 50 per cent. target for children.

The first review of the road safety strategy identified that, while we are making good progress toward meeting our overall casualty reduction targets, the number of fatal casualties has levelled off. This is a complex issue, affecting other European countries, and it is receiving in-depth analysis and special focus as we develop the strategy further.

Speed Cameras

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many speed cameras have operated since 6 December 2004, broken down by *(a)* region and *(b)* class of road. [2174]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the number of speed camera sites, broken down by partnership and class of road, within the safety camera programme as at 31 December 2004 is shown in the table. This information is provided to the Department by the safety camera partnerships.

Safety cameras in England and Wales by region and class of road for 2005

PA Name	*Camera type*	*Road type*	*Number*
Avon and Somerset	Fixed	Rural	30
Avon and Somerset	Fixed	Urban	67
Avon and Somerset	Mobile	Rural	39
Avon and Somerset	Mobile	Urban	196
Bedfordshire	Fixed	Rural	22
Bedfordshire	Fixed	Urban	29
Bedfordshire	Mobile	Rural	13
Bedfordshire	Mobile	Urban	46
Cambridgeshire	Fixed	Rural	24
Cambridgeshire	Fixed	Urban	41
Cambridgeshire	Mobile	Rural	20
Cambridgeshire	Mobile	Urban	6
Cheshire	Fixed	Rural	12
Cheshire	Fixed	Urban	19
Cheshire	Mobile	Rural	2
Cheshire	Mobile	Urban	32
Cleveland	Fixed	Rural	1
Cleveland	Fixed	Urban	1
Cleveland	Mobile	Rural	7
Cleveland	Mobile	Urban	51
Cumbria	Mobile	Rural	28
Cumbria	Mobile	Urban	14
Derbyshire	Fixed	Rural	2
Derbyshire	Fixed	Urban	45
Derbyshire	Mobile	Rural	20
Derbyshire	Mobile	Urban	56
Devon and Cornwall	Fixed	Rural	3
Devon and Cornwall	Fixed	Urban	80
Devon and Cornwall	Mobile	Rural	16
Devon and Cornwall	Mobile	Urban	65
Dorset	Fixed	Rural	3
Dorset	Fixed	Urban	42
Dorset	Mobile	Rural	24
Dorset	Mobile	Urban	38
Essex	Fixed	Rural	1
Essex	Fixed	Urban	92
Essex	Mobile	Urban	123
Greater Manchester	Fixed	Rural	3
Greater Manchester	Fixed	Urban	65
Greater Manchester	Mobile	Rural	2
Greater Manchester	Mobile	Urban	75
Hampshire	Fixed	Rural	4
Hampshire	Fixed	Urban	23
Hampshire	Mobile	Rural	4
Hampshire	Mobile	Urban	37
Hertfordshire	Fixed	Rural	5
Hertfordshire	Fixed	Urban	47
Hertfordshire	Mobile	Urban	24
Humberside	Mobile	Rural	9
Humberside	Mobile	Urban	70
Kent and Medway	Fixed	Rural	6
Kent and Medway	Fixed	Urban	66
Kent and Medway	Mobile	Rural	18
Kent and Medway	Mobile	Urban	32
Lancashire	Fixed	Rural	19
Lancashire	Fixed	Urban	272
Lancashire	Mobile	Rural	15
Lancashire	Mobile	Urban	46
Leicestershire	Fixed	Rural	2
Leicestershire	Fixed	Urban	15
Leicestershire	Mobile	Rural	26
Leicestershire	Mobile	Urban	48
Lincolnshire	Fixed	Rural	22
Lincolnshire	Fixed	Urban	24
Lincolnshire	Mobile	Rural	16
Lincolnshire	Mobile	Urban	2
London	Fixed	Rural	58
London	Fixed	Urban	265
Norfolk	Fixed	Rural	2
Norfolk	Fixed	Urban	12
Norfolk	Mobile	Rural	50

Safety cameras in England and Wales by region and class of road for 2005

PA Name	*Camera type*	*Road type*	*Number*
Norfolk	Mobile	Urban	11
North Wales	Fixed	Urban	12
North Wales	Mobile	Rural	11
North Wales	Mobile	Urban	50
Northamptonshire	Fixed	Rural	12
Northamptonshire	Fixed	Urban	31
Northamptonshire	Mobile	Rural	16
Northamptonshire	Mobile	Urban	19
Northumbria	Fixed	Rural	15
Northumbria	Fixed	Urban	30
Northumbria	Mobile	Rural	14
Northumbria	Mobile	Urban	66
Nottinghamshire	Fixed	Rural	2
Nottinghamshire	Fixed	Urban	11
Nottinghamshire	Mobile	Rural	13
Nottinghamshire	Mobile	Urban	34
South Wales (new 2002)	Fixed	Rural	4
South Wales (new 2002)	Fixed	Urban	139
South Wales (new 2002)	Mobile	Rural	60
South Wales (new 2002)	Mobile	Urban	226
South Yorkshire	Fixed	Rural	6
South Yorkshire	Fixed	Urban	52
South Yorkshire	Mobile	Rural	1
South Yorkshire	Mobile	Urban	62
Staffordshire	Fixed	Rural	42
Staffordshire	Fixed	Urban	181
Staffordshire	Mobile	Rural	11
Staffordshire	Mobile	Urban	22
Suffolk	Fixed	Rural	3
Suffolk	Fixed	Urban	5
Suffolk	Mobile	Rural	26
Suffolk	Mobile	Urban	74
Sussex	Fixed	Rural	3
Sussex	Fixed	Urban	46
Sussex	Mobile	Urban	36
Thames Valley	Fixed	Rural	1
Thames Valley	Fixed	Urban	30
Thames Valley	Mobile	Rural	3
Thames Valley	Mobile	Urban	6
Warwickshire	Fixed	Rural	11
Warwickshire	Fixed	Urban	11
Warwickshire	Mobile	Rural	22
Warwickshire	Mobile	Urban	14
West Mercia	Fixed	Urban	14
West Mercia	Mobile	Rural	15
West Mercia	Mobile	Urban	36
West Midlands	Fixed	Rural	13
West Midlands	Fixed	Urban	115
West Yorkshire	Fixed	Rural	30
West Yorkshire	Fixed	Urban	218
West Yorkshire	Mobile	Rural	14
West Yorkshire	Mobile	Urban	133
Wiltshire	Fixed	Rural	6
Wiltshire	Fixed	Urban	5
Wiltshire	Mobile	Rural	31
Wiltshire	Mobile	Urban	37

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many speed cameras there were in *(a)* Brent East and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 1997. [2544]

Dr. Ladyman: The information broken down as requested is not held centrally by the Department. The London Safety Camera Partnership publishes details of the number of safety camera sites, by London borough, available through its website www.lscp.org.uk

Street Lights

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many and what percentage of street lights were broken on the last date for which figures are available; and what the average time taken to repair a street light was in the most recent period for which figures are available. [2417]

Ms Buck: Street lighting is the responsibility of individual highway authorities, and the information requested is not held centrally. However, from 2005–06, local authorities will be required to report best value performance indicator (BVPI) 215, which will measure the average time taken to rectify street light faults.

The Department for Transport works with the UK Lighting Board to encourage local authorities to adopt best practice in street lighting management, especially through promotion of Well-lit Highways: Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management (TSO, 2004).

Traffic Management Act

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects Part VI of the Traffic Management Act 2004 to be brought into force. [2778]

Ms Buck: Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, which covers the civil enforcement by local authorities of a range of parking and traffic contraventions, will be brought into effect in stages as the necessary regulations and statutory guidance are completed. We are working on the parking provisions first and hope that they will be put in place during 2006.

Vehicle Excise Duty

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions in the last 12 months for which figures are available the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency initiated court proceedings against people who were believed not to have paid vehicle excise duty, broken down by regional authority. [1471]

Dr. Ladyman: During the period April 2004 to the end of March 2005 192,818 cases were prosecuted in court for Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) evasion. A VED offence is prosecuted in the area in which it is detected. A breakdown of cases by regional authority could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress his Department's alternative livelihoods programme in Afghanistan has made in the last six months; and if he will make a statement. [2141]

Hilary Benn: Over the past six months the Government of Afghanistan has strengthened its resolve to tackle the problem of opium cultivation and placed greater emphasis on the role of alternative livelihoods in a successful counter-narcotics effort. There is evidence which suggests that figures for poppy planting in 2005 may be lower than they were in 2004. This is good news, but the challenge will be to maintain that trend.

In view of this, DFID has increased the amount of its funding allocated to the development of alternative livelihoods. This year, DFID is spending around half its total development assistance budget to Afghanistan on alternative livelihoods (approximately £50 million). In total, the international community is providing over US$300 million in alternative livelihoods assistance across all 34 provinces.

We know from experience that development of sustainable alternative livelihoods takes time. Sustained reductions in levels of opium cultivation will ultimately be the measure of the success of our efforts, but on their own the availability of alternative livelihoods will not stop people growing opium. People stop growing opium poppy for a number of reasons, including the impact that interdiction and other law enforcement activities have, as well as the availability of other ways of earning a living. Collectively, the UK Government is helping the Afghans to work out how to co-ordinate these efforts better in the future.

Examples of what DFID, working closely with the Government, will provide, in terms of alternative livelihoods opportunities over the next year or so, include: 5.8 million days of work, benefiting 190,000 people and providing a range of essential local infrastructure; agricultural inputs e.g. seeds and fertiliser to at least 36,000 farmers; micro-credit to 125,000 new clients and block grants totalling $40 million to 1,090 democratically elected Community Development Councils for small-scale productive and social infrastructure in villages in the top seven poppy growing provinces.

Private Finance Projects

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the private finance initiative and public private partnership projects his Department is undertaking; and what the status of each is. [2368]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development is not currently undertaking any private finance initiative or public private partnership projects.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal Welfare

16. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department plans to take to improve animal welfare. [2617]

Mr. Bradshaw: Animal welfare is primarily the responsibility of animal owners and keepers. The UK Government play an active role to improve animal welfare internationally and at EU level where most rules governing farmed animals are agreed. The Animal Welfare Bill which we hope to bring before the House shortly will be the most important piece of animal welfare legislation for nearly 100 years.

Dairy Supply Chain

17. **Mr. Liddell-Grainger:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to improve transparency in the dairy supply chain. [2618]

Jim Knight: In September 2004, the Milk Development Council published its first annual report on margins across the dairy supply chain. DEFRA has also made a grant of nearly £0.5 million to the Food Chain Centre to conduct a value chain analysis which should help improve understanding and trust along the dairy supply chain.

Bovine Tuberculosis

18. **Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cattle were slaughtered in the last recorded month as a result of bovine tuberculosis. [2619]

Mr. Bradshaw: Latest provisional TB statistics indicate that 2,613 cattle were slaughtered as bovine tuberculosis reactors or direct contacts in April 2005.

Gangmasters Licensing Authority

19. **Mark Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on progress on the establishment of the gangmasters licensing authority. [2620]

Jim Knight: The Gangmaster Licensing Bill received Royal Assent on 8 July 2004. Regulations establishing the Gangmasters Licensing Authority were approved by Parliament in March and the authority started work on 1 April.

Water Leakages

21. **Mr. Forth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the level of water leakage from pipes. [2622]

Mr. Morley: Ofwat publish leakage figures annually. Overall water company leakage for 2003–04 showed a small increase (1 per cent.) from the previous year. However, most companies achieved the leakage targets set by Ofwat and are operating at their economical level of leakage. Figures for 2004–05 are expected to be available from Ofwat in July.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the water leakage rate for each water company was in the latest period for which figures are available. [2726]

Mr. Morley: The Director General of Water Services publishes leakage figures annually in the 'Security of Supply, Leakage and the Effective Use of Water'. The figures for 2004–05 have not yet been published. Ofwat will publish these figures in July and the formal report will be published towards the end of 2005.

However, in 2003–04 total water company leakage, in Megalitres per day, was reported as follows:

	Megalitres
Anglian	216
Bournemouth and W Hants	22
Bristol	53
Cambridge	14
Dee Valley	10
Dwr Cymru	231
Folkestone and Dover	8
Mid Kent	30
Northumbrian North	160
Northumbrian South	70
Portsmouth	30
Severn Trent	512
South East	69
South Staffordshire	71
South West	84
Southern	92
Sutton and East Surrey	24
Tendring Hundred	5
Thames	946
Three Valleys	152
United Utilities	479
Wessex	75
Yorkshire	295

Rural Crime

22. **Mr. Hollobone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Home Office to develop strategies to reduce crime in rural communities. [2623]

Jim Knight: I, my ministerial colleagues and DEFRA officials frequently meet with colleagues in the Home Office to discuss issues which are of importance to rural communities, including crime.

Renewable Energy (Crops)

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to promote alternative crops for renewable energy. [2650]

Mr. Morley: The Government is committed to supporting energy crops. Ministers and officials work closely with other Government Departments on the development of policy. Officials are working closely with farmers, project developers and others to promote the potential of energy crops.

Aid is available to establish crops for the production of heat, electricity and transport biofuels, and to develop supply chains for crops for heat and electricity generation. R and D programmes and commissioned reports support the development of current and new energy crops. Funding has been provided for farmers' open days and industry conferences. £66 million has been allocated to develop markets for biomass, including energy crops, in heat and electricity generation. The co-firing of energy crops with fossil fuels in conventional power stations is promoted under the Renewables Obligation. The biomass study task force, led by Sir Ben Gill, is working with all stakeholders to identify the barriers to developing biomass heat and electricity and will recommend ways to overcome the problems. The production of transport biofuels is promoted through duty rate cuts and the Government is carrying out a feasibility study on the possible introduction of a renewable transport fuel obligation. A number of companies have indicated that such an obligation would encourage them to build processing plants in this country and to include UK-grown crops as a feedstock.

Tenant Farmers

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average net annual income for a tenant farmer has been in each year since 1980. [1482]

Jim Knight: The average annual net farm incomes for a tenanted farmer since 1980 are shown in the following table. For comparative purposes mixed tenure, owner occupied and all tenure farms are also shown. Net farm income is defined as the return to the principal farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and on the tenant type capital of the business.

Net farm incomes in England by tenure types

	Fully tenanted	*Mixed tenure*	*Owner occupied*	*£/farm All tenure types*
1980–81	9,200	9,300	10,800	9,700
1981–82	10,600	15,100	18,100	14,100
1982–83	13,700	18,300	20,000	17,000
1983–84	10,200	14,200	18,400	13,800
1984–85	11,900	9,800	19,100	13,700
1985–86	8,300	10,000	12,100	9,800
1986–87	9,200	12,900	18,000	12,600
1987–88	12,200	12,600	12,700	12,400
1988–89	12,200	15,100	16,500	14,000
1989–90	15,500	17,700	23,800	18,500
1990–91	13,500	14,200	21,100	16,000
1991–92	14,400	18,200	24,700	18,200
1992–93	20,600	27,800	33,400	25,900
1993–94	18,700	24,600	33,700	24,400
1994–95	22,100	29,400	39,400	28,800
1995–96	30,100	38,600	52,000	38,200
1996–97	26,900	29,300	41,700	31,700
1997–98	12,700	16,100	18,700	15,200
1998–99	8,200	11,600	17,000	11,500
1999–2000	6,800	9,700	11,400	8,700
2000–01	7,900	10,200	15,200	10,600
2001–02[1]	12,000	13,800	18,600	14,900
2002–03	13,700	16,400	20,300	16,600
2003–04	22,200	26,800	41,100	30,200

[1] Excluding farms subject to compulsory foot and mouth disease cull.

Source:

Farm Business Survey

Water Meter Charges

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people in Coventry South were in receipt of the social tariff for water meter charges in each of the last three years. [2615]

Mr. Morley: Figures for water charges are not collected on a constituency basis.

The following table sets out the numbers of households who are customers of Severn Trent Water in receipt of the social tariff, also known as the vulnerable groups tariff, over the last three years for which figures are available, as collected by the Office of Water Services (Ofwat).

	Number of households
2003–04	682
2002–03	449
2001–02	373

PRIME MINISTER

Darfur

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Prime Minister (1) when he last discussed with NATO colleagues the situation in Darfur; and if he will make a statement; [2398]

(2) when he last discussed with G8 colleagues the situation in Darfur; and if he will make a statement; [2399]

(3) when he last discussed with his EU counterparts the situation in Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [2400]

The Prime Minister: I regularly have discussions with our NATO, G8 and EU colleagues on a wide range of international issues, including the situation in Darfur. We continue to be in constant contact with the Government of Sudan, both at ministerial and official level. Our presidency of the EU and G8 will give an opportunity to continue these discussions at all levels.

Lord Chancellor

Mr. Heald: To ask the Prime Minister whether it is his intention that the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs should retain this title in addition to the title of Lord Chancellor. [2818]

The Prime Minister: Yes.

HEALTH

Air Pollution

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* fatalities and *(b)* respiratory hospital admissions caused by transport-related air pollution, excluding ozone in the last period for which figures are available. [2380]

Caroline Flint: This information is not collected directly as it is not possible to identify individual patients affected by air pollution. The link between air pollution and hospital admissions is derived from statistical correlations between daily air pollution levels and routine daily statistics on total deaths or respiratory hospital admissions.

The Department's committee on the medical effects of air pollutants (COMEAP) estimated in 1998[1] that there were 10,500 respiratory hospital admissions (additional or brought forward) and 8,100 deaths brought forward per year due to PM_{10} (particles less than 10 micrometres in diameter) in urban areas of Great Britain.

Assuming that around a quarter of the PM_{10}[2] in urban areas is due directly or indirectly to emissions from transport, as a rough estimate it can be assumed that up to around 2,500 respiratory hospital admissions and around 2,000 deaths brought forward in urban areas of Great Britain may have been related to emissions from transport at that time.

This estimate does not include the impact of transport emissions on life expectancy and on cardiovascular admissions. These were not quantified by COMEAP at the time of the 1998 report. Further work on this issue is likely to be considered as part of the work of the new COMEAP sub-group on quantification.

[1] Based on pollution levels in 1996. Pollution levels have reduced substantially since then.

[2] This includes PM_{10} derived directly from road, rail, aircraft and ships and PM_{10} derived indirectly from NO_x transport emissions from the UK and Europe. It excludes sources such as coarse dust, sea salt, and emissions from industry.

Ambulance Service

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many ambulance stations there were in London in each of the last five years. [2531]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not held centrally.

Clinical Negligence

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her most recent estimate is of the average time taken to settle a claim for clinical negligence against the NHS; and what the figure was in 1997. [254]

Jane Kennedy: The latest available data from the NHS Litigation Authority (NHSLA) is shown in the table. There is no directly comparable data available for 1997. However, the National Audit Office estimated that of claims closed in 1999–2000, the average time taken from claim to payment of damages was five and a half years, and the average total time from incident to payment of damages was just over seven years. These figures were for existing liability scheme (ELS) cases. The ELS covers clinical negligence claims made against the national health service in England where the incident in question took place before April 1995. While initially, NHS bodies were responsible for handling and funding lower-value ELS claims themselves, since April 2000 all ELS claims have been handled centrally by the NHSLA.

2004–05

	Years
Existing liability scheme cases (ELS)[1]	3.82
Clinical negligence scheme trust cases (CNST)[2]	1.36

[1] The ELS cases are those cases open at 1 April 1996 and taken over by the NHSLA. These tended to have been handled locally by NHS trusts before the NHSLA were notified of them.

[2] The CNST scheme covers clinical negligence cases where the treatment was delivered after 1 April 1995. They have usually been dealt with directly by the NHSLA from the start of the case.

Source:
NHS Litigation Authority

Complaints Procedures

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many inappropriate referrals to patient advisory and liaison services there were in the last period for which figures are available; how she plans to ensure that consumers of health services who are not satisfied with the treatment they receive know to whom they should complain; and what help is available in making such complaints. [1608]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data about inappropriate referrals to patient advice and liaison services (PALS) is not collected centrally.

Consumers of health services who are not satisfied with the treatment they receive will have access to a range of help and information sources, which can point out to whom they should complain. In particular, national health service and primary care organisations are required to publicise their complaints procedure, including the name of the complaints manager. There should also be local publicity about the role and location of PALS, which can often offer on the spot help and potential resolution of issues without engagement in the formal complaints procedure.

Continuing Care

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make a statement on the progress being made in developing a national framework for the assessment of NHS continuing care; whether the framework will constitute a single, universal set of national eligibility criteria for access to NHS continuing care; what representations she has received on whether the current eligibility criteria are weighted towards physical needs, as opposed to mental health or psychological need; whether the national framework will include a national standard assessment methodology; and whether she expects that the national framework will integrate the system for assessing NHS continuing care with the system for assessing NHS-funded nursing care; [2282]

(2) what steps she is taking to ensure that patients with continuing needs are offered assessments for NHS continuing care; and what steps she is taking to ensure that assessments for NHS continuing care are carried out before assessments for NHS funded nursing care; [2285]

(3) what steps she is taking to ensure that the potential savings available to residents of care homes deemed eligible for either NHS continuing care or NHS-funded nursing care are reflected in reduced care home fees.[2286]

Mr. Byrne: All strategic health authorities (SHAs) have undergone a review of their current eligibility criteria to ensure their legal compliance. New cases are now considered routinely as part of hospital discharge. This ensures that patients are assessed first for continuing care, if they do not meet the criteria they are then considered for national health service-funded nursing care only. Assessments are based on the totality of an individual's physical and mental care needs arising from one or more disability, accident or illness.

Where someone is assessed as needing NHS continuing care, the NHS directly provides all the services that the individual has been assessed as requiring. If the individual needs to be in a care home, then the care home fees are paid directly by the NHS.

An amendment to the care home regulations obliges homes to provide a breakdown of their fees. When an individual in a care home receives registered nursing care, therefore, it should be clear to the resident which aspect of their fees relate to registered nursing care, and which to residential care.

The Department is currently working closely with stakeholders to produce a national framework for assessment for continuing care due for publication in early 2006. This should result in national eligibility criteria and suitable assessment methodologies for access to NHS continuing care. The Department has a number of representations about the development of a national framework, all of which will be taken into account in its development. In accordance with Cabinet Office guidelines, we will consult on the official guidance and any legislation required later this year.

Decompensated Cirrhosis

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the trend in numbers of cases of decompensated cirrhosis. [1704]

Caroline Flint: Figures for cases of decompensated cirrhosis are not held centrally.

Dental Services

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will begin consultation on a new system of dental patient charges; and on what date she first received the report on options for a new system. [232]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A dental charges working group, led by Harry Cayton, the Department's Director for Patients and the Public, submitted proposals for a new system of dental patient charges to the Department in March 2004. These proposals are being considered alongside information about the effects of the new pilot dental contracts on treatment patterns. A written ministerial statement in January indicated that we would be consulting on the regulations for a new system of dental charges in the summer.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the value is of each recruitment contract awarded to Methods Consulting for recruiting overseas dentists in *(a)* Greece, *(b)* Portugal, *(c)* Germany, *(d)* Spain and *(e)* India; and how many dentists Methods Consulting are contracted to recruit from each country. [2770]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No contracts have been awarded by the Department to Methods Consulting for recruiting dentists from Greece, Portugal, Germany, Spain or India.

Domiciliary Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made on the recording of adverse events in domiciliary care services. [2913]

Mr. Byrne: Departmental officials are working with Action on Elder Abuse, the United Kingdom Home Care Association and the Commission for Social Care Inspection to consider this recommendation from the Health Select Committee Inquiry into elder abuse. The outcome of this work will be fed into the review of the national minimum standards announced by the Government in October 2004.

Evesham Community Hospital

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely impact of proposals to close two wards at Evesham community hospital on *(a)* capacity in the Worcestershire health service and *(b)* compliance with her Department's policy on giving priority to local wishes in developing local services. [2773]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Decisions about the configuration of local national health service services are taken at a local level.

South Worcestershire primary care trust (PCT) is considering a number of options for the configuration of services across South Worcestershire in the future. The PCT will be entering into wide and detailed discussions during the coming weeks with key individuals, groups and organisations including the overview and scrutiny committee.

West Midlands South strategic health authority is working closely with South Worcestershire PCT to ensure that the views of the public are sought and taken into account in developing the proposals and that any changes are in line with "Keeping the NHS Local".

Food Labelling

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with retailers about country of origin labelling requirements for food. [2605]

Caroline Flint: I have had no specific discussions with retailers on country of origin labelling. However, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has regular discussions with the retail sector on a range of issues and these have included country of origin labelling.

The FSA is currently reviewing its best practice guidance on country of origin labelling; it is also likely that the European Commission review of labelling legislation, which is currently under way, will address it. The retail sector is being consulted and is involved in both of these processes.

Genetically Modified Food

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she is taking to assess whether the genetically modified corn MON 863 is safe for human consumption; and if she will make a statement. [1195]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 26 May 2005]:* Genetically-modified crops undergo a rigorous safety evaluation before they are authorised in the European Union for food use for human consumption. The European Food Safety Authority in its safety assessment of MON 863 stated that there were no concerns over the safety of the maize. This was endorsed by the United Kingdom Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes. A decision has not yet been taken on the authorisation of MON 863 maize for food use in the EU.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she received on the effects of GM maize MON 863 on human health prior to *(a)* 29 November 2004 and *(b)* 19 May 2005. [2016]

Caroline Flint: A vote on the authorisation of MON 863 genetically-modified (GM) maize grain, including animal feed but excluding food and cultivation, under the deliberate release directive 2001/18/EC took place on 29 November 2004. The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs received one representation prior to this date. Friends of the Earth Europe wrote to all competent authorities for directive 2001/18/EC on 17 November 2004, urging member states to consider human and animal safety in deciding how to vote on MON 863.

A vote on the authorisation of foods derived from MON 863 GM maize under the novel foods regulation was taken at a regulatory meeting in Brussels on 19 May 2005. The Food Standards Agency did not receive any representations on the effects of MON 863 on human health prior to this date.

Health Improvement and Protection Bill

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate the Government have made of the costs to local authorities in England of the introduction and implementation of the proposed Health Improvement and Protection Bill. [1094]

Caroline Flint: A full regulatory impact assessment will be published when the Bill is introduced into Parliament.

Hepatitis C

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the trends in rates of infection of hepatitis C among injectors in the last three years for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [1838]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* Information on the prevalence of antibodies to hepatitis C, found in both past and current infection, among current and former injecting drug users in contact with drug agencies and services, may be obtained from the Health Protection Agency's unlinked anonymous prevalence monitoring programme. In addition, the prevalence of antibodies among those who began injecting in the last three years, that is, recent injectors, is also available from this survey. Figures for the last three years are available from the Health Protection Agency report "Shooting Up", October 2004. This is available at: www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/injectingdrugusers/ShootingUp-2004.pdf.

Among its many conclusions, the report states that the proportion of injecting drug users reporting having a voluntary confidential test for hepatitis C has increased, indicating that efforts to improve access to testing may be working.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health by what benchmarks the effectiveness of her Department's hepatitis C awareness campaign will be assessed; and if she will make a statement. [1464]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* Before the hepatitis C awareness campaign commenced in June 2004, the Department conducted a market research exercise to determine the level of awareness of hepatitis C, amongst health professionals and the general public.

This provided the Department with a benchmark from which the effectiveness of the subsequent awareness campaign, for both health professionals and the general public, could later be measured. It is planned to repeat this once the awareness campaign is better established.

In addition, the Department will assess progress on the national outcome indicators as set out in the Department's Hepatitis C Strategy for England, August 2002 and the subsequent "Hepatitis C Action Plan for England, 2004". For example, the increase in the total number of laboratory-confirmed hepatitis C infection reports.

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make it her policy to introduce proactive screening of at risk groups for hepatitis C. [1702]

Caroline Flint: The Department has already published information and guidance for health professionals and for the public, highlighting those considered to be at risk of hepatitis C infection and who should consider being tested, or should be offered testing, for hepatitis C infection. This forms part of the hepatitis C awareness campaign and there is currently a continuing programme to raise awareness of hepatitis C among the public and those groups at risk.

In addition, a new national health service hepatitis C awareness website has been launched at: www.hepc.nhs.uk.

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what account has been taken in resource planning of the trends in incidence of hepatitis C, with particular reference to demand for liver transplants. [1706]

Caroline Flint: The Department has commissioned a report from researchers at Southampton Medical School on the likely future demand for liver transplant, which highlighted future pressures not only from hepatitis C but also the rise in obesity, which leads to fatty liver failure.

At present, the transplant programme is entirely constrained by the availability of donor organs. Measures to increase the supply of organs include public awareness for donor programmes, currently about 45 per cent. of next of kin decline permission for organ removal, as well as new surgical techniques (splitting allows one liver to be used for two recipients).

In addition, the Department has commissioned from the Health Protection Agency, a project to mathematically model future hepatitis C related liver disease.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she has taken to ensure that patients from different areas of the country have equal access to treatments for hepatitis C; and if she will make a statement. [1839]

Caroline Flint [holding answer 6 June 2005]: In line with "Shifting the Balance of Power", most national health service funding is now passed on to local NHS organisations so that they can make decisions about local needs and services. There has been substantial increased investment in the NHS, which includes funding for National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)-recommended treatments.

Decisions on funding of treatment for chronic hepatitis C at the local level are therefore a matter for primary care trusts and their local partners. Strategic health authorities (SHAs) have been asked to ensure that local arrangements are in place to provide appropriate services.

In June 2004, the then Secretary of State, John Reid announced plans to achieve better and equal access to NICE-recommended therapies. As part of these proposals, it is intended that information about NICE-recommended drugs prescribed and dispensed in hospitals will be available to the NHS. This will enable SHAs to compare their own uptake of drugs recommended by NICE with the national distribution. Where uptake locally appears to be below average, SHAs will be expected to investigate and take action to overcome the barriers to implementation. This information will also be available to the Healthcare Commission, which has indicated that assessing the implementation of NICE guidance will be one of their key priorities.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on the hepatitis C awareness campaign in the most recent year for which figures are available; how much she has allocated to the campaign for future years; and if she will make a statement. [1840]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* The expenditure on the hepatitis C awareness campaign in the financial year 2004–05 was about £0.7 million. The projected expenditure for the campaign in the financial year 2005–06 is estimated to be around £1.5 million.

Hospital Expenditure

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written Answer of 25 May 2005, *Official Report,* column 119W, on Health Service Expenditure, what the total hospital expenditure alone was in each year since 1996–97 in *(a)* nominal terms and *(b)* real terms. [2250]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 24 March 2005, *Official Report,* column 1065W.

It is not possible to provide figures for hospital expenditure alone as this information cannot be separately identified from the accounts of national health service bodies.

Mental Health

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the incidence of mental health problems, including clinical depression, was among those who have lost their sight in *(a)* England and *(b)* the Coventry area in each of the last five years. [2111]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available for each of the last five years. However, the latest information on registered blind people is available from the triennial data collection, "Registered Blind and Partially Sighted People" for the year ending 31 March 2003. This is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/02/33/04080233.pdf.

At 31 March 2003, 157,000 people were on the register of blind people in England, of which 34,000 were also categorised as having an additional disability. 3 per cent.

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of all registered blind people who had an additional disability were also recorded as having a mental illness. Similar information for Coventry shows that about 1 per cent. of people categorised as having an additional disability were recorded as having a mental illness.

Registration of blindness is voluntary so the register does not necessarily include all people who are blind. However, it is a pre-condition for the receipt of certain benefits.

Monsanto's Maize

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the implications for human health of the findings of the EU study into the safety of Monsanto's MON863 maize, with particular reference to the effects on rats fed this maize. [1528]

Caroline Flint: The safety of the food use of genetically modified MON863 maize has been reviewed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which concluded in April 2004 that it is unlikely to have an adverse effect on human health. The EFSA evaluation included an assessment of a study in rats fed MON863 maize grain. EFSA subsequently examined a critical review of this feeding study and concluded that it did not raise any issues that caused EFSA to revise its opinion. EFSA's conclusion on the food use of MON863 maize has been endorsed by the United Kingdom Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes.

Nurses

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many and what percentage of nurses in each primary care trust area reported personal back and joint injuries for the first time in each of the last five years;[1294]

(2) how many and what percentage of nurses in each primary care trust area retired as a result of back or joint problems in each of the last five years. [1295]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect this information centrally, but recognises that pain accounts for 40 per cent. of sickness absence in the national health service. That is why the back in work campaign was launched nationally in 2002 to reduce back injuries among NHS staff.

Paddington Health Campus

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the running costs of the Paddington health campus project have been on *(a)* a monthly basis and *(b)* a cumulative basis since its inception; [2149]

(2) what the cumulative costs of external consultants providing advice on the Paddington health campus project are. [2151]

Mr. Byrne: The running costs, on a monthly basis, of the Paddington health campus project are not held centrally. The estimated cumulative expenditure on development of the project is about £13.8 million of which about £7.8 million relates to external consultants. This development expenditure is under a quarter of one per cent. of the cost of a project of this scale.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the timetable and process to reach a conclusion on the viability of the Paddington health campus project, in the light of the resolution by the Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS trust not to recommend the addendum to the outline business case for approval by the strategic health authority. [2153]

Mr. Byrne: North West London strategic health authority will consider the outline business case at its extraordinary meeting on 21 June and a decision on the future of the project will be made thereafter.

Phthalates

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if her Department will commission research into the effect of phthalates *(a)* as an environmental pollutant and *(b)* on reproductive health. [2574]

Caroline Flint: Phthalates are a family of chemical substances, with a range of properties. Extensive research into the effects of certain phthalates on both the environment and human health has been carried out at a European level, under the auspices for the European Union's Existing Substances Regulation (793/93/EC). Details of the programme can be found on the European Chemicals Bureau website at: http://ecb.jrc.it/existing-chemicals/. The United Kingdom has commented upon the detailed risk assessments and ensuing risk reduction strategy for the various phthalates which have been studied.

These risk assessments and risk reduction strategies concluded that these phthalates do not pose a risk to the environment or, where a risk was anticipated, adequate control measures were already in place on an EU-wide basis to control the potential risk. As a result, the UK has no current plans to commission research into phthalates as an environmental pollutant but will consider each on a case by case basis where new data come to light.

These detailed EU risk assessments have indicated that some phthalate compounds have been shown in animal studies to produce toxic effects on the reproductive system and this has led to European-wide restrictions on their use in consumer products, in order to prevent exposure of young children, as a precaution. However, other phthalates have not shown such effects, despite being adequately investigated for reproductive toxicity.

The UK takes the view that phthalates must be considered on a case-by-case basis. Where the database is insufficient to complete a risk assessment, it is normally expected that the industry will carry out the required additional research. However, the Government have asked their expert committee, the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment, to keep the area of environmental chemicals and reproductive health under review and will consider their advice on the need for additional research in this area.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what action she plans to take to tackle non-compliance with National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines on the treatment of severe rheumatoid arthritis; [2700]

(2) what estimate she has made of the number of patients with severe rheumatoid arthritis who would benefit from anti-TNFa therapy but who do not receive it; and if she will make a statement; [2737]

(3) if she will make a statement on whether anti-TNFa treatment will be made available on prescription in all areas. [3566]

Mr. Byrne: It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities to ensure local compliance with clinical guidelines issued by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

The Department does not hold information on the number of people who would benefit from, or are receiving, specific treatments.

All primary care trusts in England and Wales are obliged to make available anti-tumour necrosis factor treatment for those patients with rheumatoid arthritis who meet the clinical guidelines issued by NICE.

Visual Impairment

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the Department plans to address individual needs in their provision of services for people who suffer sight loss; and if she will set up a care agency to co-ordinate the provision of services for people who suffer from sight loss. [2112]

Mr. Byrne: Provision of support and services for people who suffer sight loss are the responsibility of the local national health service and social care agencies. It is at a local level that services are commissioned and provided for people who suffer sight loss. We have no plans to set up a care agency to co-ordinate the provision of services for people who suffer from sight loss.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Bailiffs

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the Department's plans to reform the law relating to bailiffs and the enforcement of fines. [2816]

Ms Harman: Proposals to reform the law relating to bailiffs were published in the Government White Paper 'Effective Enforcement' in March 2003.

The collection of fines is a priority in increasing confidence in the Criminal Justice System (CJS). Progress has been made through a combination of legislative and non-legislative measures. The payment rate for financial impositions in 2004–05 was 80 per cent. compared to a baseline of 69 per cent. at the end of the first quarter of 2003–04.

The Courts Act 2003 is being implemented during 2005–06.

Ineffective and Cracked Trials

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps the Department is taking to reduce the number of *(a)* ineffective and *(b)* cracked trials. [2853]

Ms Harman: The ineffective and cracked trial rate is a CJS performance indicator. Since June 2002, the national rate has improved from 24 per cent. to 14.0 per cent. in the Crown court and by 31 per cent. to 22.1 per cent. in the magistrates courts. This represents approximately a 42 per cent. and 28 per cent. improvement in the Crown court and magistrates courts respectively

Jury Research

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the Department's plans to reform provisions relating to jury research and impropriety. [2815]

Ms Harman: My Department currently has no plans to reform provisions relating to jury research and impropriety. In January 2005 my Department published a Consultation Paper—"Jury Research and Impropriety" and the relevant consultation period finished on 15 April. The responses are currently being analysed and an announcement of the Government's intentions for any change will be made in due course.

Magistrates

Mr. Allen: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many magistrates there are in each commission area, broken down by constituency; and what assessment she has made of trends in recruitment. [2859]

Ms Harman: Information on the number of magistrates is collected by advisory committee area and is set out as follows as of 31 March 2005.

Advisory committee area	*Total*
Avon	305
Barnsley	108
Batley and Dewsbury	86
Bedfordshire	296
Berkshire	361
Birmingham	414
Bradford	243
Bristol	292
Buckinghamshire	368
Calderdale	129
Cambridgeshire	363
Carmarthen	145
Ceredigion	61
Cheshire	456
Cleveland	480
Clwyd	396
Cornwall	216
Coventry	231

Advisory committee area	*Total*
Cumbria	295
Derbyshire	398
Devon	337
Doncaster	180
Dorset	350
Dudley	220
Durham	286
Essex	619
Gateshead	138
Glamorgan—Mid	233
Glamorgan—South	340
Glamorgan—West	257
Gloucestershire	243
Greater Manchester	1,781
Gwent	290
Hampshire	777
Hereford and Worcester	438
Hertfordshire	428
Huddersfield	115
Humberside	272
Isle of Wight	69
Keighley	110
Kent	763
Kingston upon Hull	167
Lancashire	1,140
Leeds	396
Leicester	273
Leicestershire	246
Lincolnshire	392
London—City	130
London—Inner	686
London—Middlesex	986
London—North East	515
London—South East	383
London—South West	374
Merseyside	979
Newcastle upon Tyne	210
Norfolk	442
North Yorkshire	384
Northamptonshire	380
Northumberland	189
Nottingham	386
Nottinghamshire	270
Oxfordshire	302
Pembroke	71
Plymouth	162
Pontefract	73
Powys	80
Rotherham	118
Sheffield	296
Shropshire	234
Solihull	171
Somerset	259
Staffordshire	535
Suffolk	272
Sunderland	220
Surrey	349
Sussex	768
Sutton Coldfield	149
Tyneside—North	124
Tyneside— South	112
Wakefield	88
Walsall	170
Warley	155
Warwickshire	197
West Bromwich	144
Wiltshire	267
Wolverhampton	167
Totals	28,300

The number of magistrates recruited over the last ten years is set out as follows.

	Magistrates recruited	*Men*	*Women*
1994	1,593	810	783
1995	1,843	907	936
1996	1,682	830	852
1997	1,573	764	809
1998	1,609	816	793
1999	1,743	884	859
2000	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
2001[2]	1,618	834	784
2002[3]	1,474	763	711
2003	1,623	838	785
2004	1,768	939	829

[1] No figures available

[2] From 2001, data was collected on a financial year, rather than calendar year, basis.

[3] Figures for magistrates in the Duchy of Lancaster are not available for 2002.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the proportion of magistrates from each socio-economic group in each year since 1997. [2871]

Ms Harman: Data on the proportion of magistrates from each socio-economic group is not collected.

Magistrates Courts

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many magistrates' courts have closed in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years. [1757]

Ms Harman: Up to and including 31 March 2005, the provision of magistrates' courthouses was a matter for the 42 independent Magistrates' Courts Committees (MCC).

From 1 April 2005, Her Majesty's Court Service, an executive agency of my Department, is now responsible for the administration of all magistrates' courts in England and Wales. For the last 10 years the information you requested is as follows:

	Numbers closed
1996	21
1997	22
1998	24
1999	7
2000	17
2001	24
2002	6
2003	17
2004	0
2005	1

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of rape allegations resulted in a guilty plea in England and Wales during *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [612]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Data on allegations are not collected centrally. The available information, on the number of defendants who were tried at the Crown Court for rape, the percentage pleading guilty and the percentage of those pleading not guilty who were convicted, in England and Wales in 2003 is contained in the table. Equivalent data for 2004 are not yet available.

Proportion pleading guilty and conviction rate following a not guilty plea for persons tried at the Crown Court, for rape[1], 2003

England and Wales

Offence	*Total number tried*	*Percentage pleading guilty*[2]	*Percentage of those pleading not guilty convicted*[2]
Rape of a female	1,603	15	28
Rape of a male	84	(18)	(42)
Total rape	1,687	15	29

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Excludes those not tried (i.e. bench warrants issued, indictment to lie on file, unfit to plead, defendant died etc.).

Note:

Percentages in brackets are based on totals of less than 100.

DEFENCE

Botulinum Toxin

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether *(a)* production and *(b)* testing on animals of botulinum toxin takes place at (i) Porton Down and (ii) other departmental establishments. [335]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Dstl, at Porton Down produces only a small amount of crude botulinum toxin to test detection antibodies. This is not tested on animals.

However, Dstl does produce an antitoxin to the seven serotypes of botulinum toxin. This could be used to treat personnel exposed to botulinum toxin in the event of it being used as a biological weapon. This antitoxin is manufactured in accordance with current Good Manufacturing Practice (cGMP) and has been granted a Special Licence to enable it to be administered under the direction of, and by, medical personnel in the event of an emergency. The Ministry of Defence aims to obtain a full product licence for this antitoxin. Part of the regulated production process involves the use of commercially produced botulinum toxin in an animal model to assess the efficacy of the antitoxin.

Under the UK's regulations for the approval of new medicines, an application for a product licence needs to be supported by data from animal studies showing the safety and effectiveness of the anti-toxin. All such animal tests in the UK are regulated under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

British Service Deployment

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British service personnel have been *(a)* deployed and *(b)* seconded to (i) Guantanamo Bay, (ii) Guam and (iii) Diego Garcia since 1997, and for what purpose; and if he will make a statement. [2050]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms Abbott) and the hon. Member for Carmarthen, East and Dinefwr (Adam Price) on 24 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 54W.

Darfur

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent support has been offered to the African Union Force in Darfur with *(a)* logistics and *(b)* equipment; and what British military personnel are supporting this deployment. [1634]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom strongly supports the expansion of the African Union (AU) mission in Darfur, and is working with NATO, the EU and the UN to identify what assistance can be provided to support the AU's objectives. The UK will provide £6.6 million this financial year to help the expansion of the AU mission. It is planned that the money will be used to provide, among other things, additional off-road vehicles, rapid deployment equipment (including shelters) and support to civilian policing. In addition, the Ministry of Defence will provide some movement and logistics specialists, although the exact details of this contribution is yet to be finalised.

European Defence Agency

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what legal basis there is in the EU Treaties for the establishment of a European Defence Agency. [2805]

Mr. Ingram: The European Defence Agency was established in July 2004 by a Joint Action of the Council, in accordance with Article 14 of the Treaty on European Union.

HMCS Chicoutimi

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the implications for the Royal Navy of the report and findings of the inquiry into the fire on board HMCS Chicoutimi. [653]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy is currently reviewing the findings and recommendations of the Canadian board of inquiry.

Iraq

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether private security firms and personnel are employed in the *(a)* management and *(b)* running of prisons and detention centres under the control of the UK in Iraq. [2049]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom has one detention centre in Iraq, the Divisional Temporary Detention Facility situated in Shaibah Logistics Base. No private security firms or personnel are involved in the management or running of that facility.

Military Records (First World War)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is on the preservation of military index cards relating to British servicemen in the First World War. [2339]

Mr. Touhig: The index cards to the First World War Army medal rolls are already preserved in a microfilmed format and available to researchers at the National Archives (in Class WO 372) and through the National Archives website online. The microfilming process captured the information held on the front of the cards, all but a very small percentage of the backs of the cards being blank.

The Ministry of Defence has no further administrative use for the cards and, with the National Archives, has actively sought to identify a suitable institution prepared to accept the original cards, understanding the value attached to such records by many people. The Imperial War Museum has accepted the women's cards and the remainder of the collection has been transferred into the custody of the Western Front Association.

Royal Green Jackets

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future location of the Royal Green Jackets regiment. [1865]

Mr. Ingram: No decision has been made on the future locations of the two battalions of the Royal Green Jackets.

Tornado Engine Project

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the financial impact on the Tornado engine project arising from the application of the Value Engineering Review and Management procedure for cost control; whether the procedure is applied to all defence projects; and if he will make a statement. [1170]

Mr. Ingram: This particular procedure is not used by the Ministry of Defence for the procurement and logistic support of equipment. However, the MOD uses a number of initiatives and processes in partnership with industry to improve performance, reliability, quality, safety and life cycle costs on all defence procurement projects.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Castle Court/Cathedral Way/Royal Avenue

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will produce the masterplans for the Castle Court and Cathedral Way/Royal Avenue areas of Belfast. [3477]

Mr. Hanson: Public consultation on the draft masterplans for the Castlecourt and Cathedral Way/Royal Avenue areas of Belfast ended on 23 May 2005. Officials in the Department for Social Development are evaluating the representations received on the draft masterplans and I will announce the way forward on finalising the masterplans as soon as this work is completed.

Racially Motivated Assault

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many racially motivated assaults have been reported in each of the last five years in Northern Ireland. [2806]

Mr. Woodward: The following table sets out the figures for all racially motivated incidents which took place between 2000 and 2004.

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Verbal abuse/threat	77	50	56	109
Written material	1	4	3	10
Graffiti	6	2	4	7
Physical assault	[1]58	[1]37	[1]50	[1]103
Attack on home	49	38	59	148
Attack on property	45	33	39	57
Other	24	21	15	19
Total	260	185	226	453

[1] Racially motivated assaults.

A new method of recording these figures was introduced in 2004–05. The statistics issued by the Chief Constable are subject to strict Home Office counting rules and as a result are not directly comparable with the figures provided in the previous table.

The figures for 2004–05 are as follows:

	Number
Total number of racially motivated crimes reported to police	634
Total number of racially motivated woundings and assaults	187
Total number of racially motivated incidents (includes crimes) reported to police	821

PSNI believe the rise in figures to be due to an increase in racially motivated offences, improved confidence in the PSNI among minority ethnic communities and improved recording systems.

Suicides

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have committed suicide in the Province in each of the last 10 years, broken down by age and gender. [1446]

Angela E. Smith: The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland for each year between 1995 and 2004 due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury'[1] and 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted'[2].

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes X60-X84, Y87.0 for years 2001–04 and Ninth Revision codes E950-E959 for years 1995–2000.

[2] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes Y10-Y34, Y87.2 for years 2001–04 and Ninth Revision codes E980-E989 for years 1995–2000.

Number of registered deaths by year in Northern Ireland due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury' and 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted' by gender and age

	Age band											
Gender	*Under 15*	*15–19*	*20–24*	*25–29*	*30–34*	*35–39*	*40–44*	*45–54*	*55–64*	*65–74*	*75+*	*Total*
1995												
Male	0	16	14	9	12	10	12	12	7	6	7	105
Female	1	0	4	2	1	7	3	7	8	5	3	41
1996												
Male	1	5	18	16	18	9	10	14	10	9	4	114

Number of registered deaths by year in Northern Ireland due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury' and 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted' by gender and age

						Age band						
Gender	*Under 15*	*15–19*	*20–24*	*25–29*	*30–34*	*35–39*	*40–44*	*45–54*	*55–64*	*65–74*	*75+*	*Total*
Female	0	1	2	1	3	6	3	8	0	4	1	29
1997												
Male	1	9	16	16	12	10	7	19	8	7	3	108
Female	1	3	3	1	3	1	3	7	5	3	0	30
1998												
Male	1	13	14	17	20	6	13	13	8	7	1	113
Female	0	5	0	4	4	8	4	6	3	3	0	37
1999												
Male	0	12	19	18	19	12	14	17	8	4	4	127
Female	0	5	4	1	2	5	2	4	1	2	1	27
2000												
Male	0	13	25	25	15	12	18	12	13	5	2	140
Female	0	6	0	5	4	3	8	12	3	1	3	45
2001												
Male	0	11	21	11	23	14	14	20	4	10	4	132
Female	1	1	1	3	2	1	3	7	2	4	1	26
2002												
Male	1	10	12	31	18	12	14	29	6	5	4	142
Female	1	2	0	5	10	4	4	8	3	1	3	41
2003												
Male	1	4	14	15	10	14	13	21	10	6	4	112
Female	0	1	4	0	8	4	4	8	2	1	0	32
2004[1]												
Male	0	7	12	5	13	16	10	24	10	4	4	105
Female	0	2	3	4	5	4	3	9	5	4	1	40

[1] Provisional data.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many citizens advice bureaux there were in each year since 1997. [2420]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This information is published regularly in Citizens Advice's annual report. Copies of these reports are available in the Libraries of the House.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many citizens advice bureaux offices there were in each local authority area in each year since 1997. [2461]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department does not hold this information.

Coal Health Claims

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what legal advice was given to his Department on the signing of separate coal health agreements with Vendside Ltd. and the Union of Democratic Mineworkers. [2354]

Malcolm Wicks: Following the judgments against British Coal in both the vibration white finger and respiratory disease litigations, the High Court ordered the DTI to set up schemes, in agreement with miners' solicitors, to assess compensation for both types of claim. Claims had by then been registered through the Claimants Solicitors Group (the CSG), some of which were sponsored by the main mining unions, the NUM and NACODS. The UDM had also registered a large number of claims directly on behalf of their members, through their dedicated claims handling company, Vendside Ltd. The CSG and the UDM were unable to work together or enter into single arrangements for historical reasons. The legal advice received by the Department was that it was appropriate to enter into separate claims handling arrangements with the CSG and the UDM, provided that the compensation delivered to the claimant under both schemes was the same.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what legal advice was given to his Department on the signing of a coal health claim agreement with Vendside Ltd. [2355]

Malcolm Wicks: Vendside Ltd. were, at the time of entering into the claims handling arrangements, the vehicle through which the UDM presented claims on behalf of their members. Vendside Ltd. entered into the vibration white finger claims handling arrangement for and on behalf of the UDM. The legal advice received at the time was that Vendside Ltd. had authority to enter into arrangement for and on behalf of the UDM.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when his Department was first informed of complaints about double charging by *(a)* claims handlers and *(b)* Vendside. [2582]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department first became aware of the scale of administration charges by both claims handlers and some unions in 2003.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department met the Union of Democratic Mineworkers in (i) 1998 and (ii) 1999 regarding coal health claims. [2583]

Malcolm Wicks: Detailed information on such meetings is no longer readily available.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what investigations his Department has undertaken into *(a)* Walker and Co Ltd. and *(b)* Indiclaim Ltd. [2584]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has not undertaken any investigations into Walker and Co Ltd. and Indiclaim Ltd.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the claimants' solicitors group was first informed of the *(a)* Vendside and *(b)* Union of Democratic Mineworkers coal health agreements by his Department. [2585]

Malcolm Wicks: Claimants' solicitors were first informed of the agreements with Vendside and the Union of Democratic Mineworkers in 1999.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on progress made to date in introducing a minimum payments scheme for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease claims by former miners and their families. [1597]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bassetlaw (John Mann) on 24 May 2005, *Official report,* column 51W.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of claims for compensation for cases of vibration white finger initially classified as Group 3 and for which liability was denied by claims handlers were reclassified to Groups 1 or 2 on further review; and what proportion of claims initially classified as Group 3 were accepted on review as Group 3 with exposure. [2346]

Malcolm Wicks: A total of 169,197 claims have been received for vibration white finger of which an initial Group 3 denial was made in 46,913 cases. This denial was contested in 16,260 cases and 9,937 of these cases have been investigated, with further information being provided at this stage. Completed investigations show that 36 per cent. of investigated claims are classified as Group 1 or 2 and 9 per cent. are accepted as Group 3 with exposure. So, of the 46,913 initially classified as Group 3 and denied, so far, 8 per cent. have been reclassified as Groups 1 or 2 and 2 per cent. have been accepted as Group 3 with exposure.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the performance of claims handlers in accurately determining liability in claims for compensation for vibration white finger. [2347]

Malcolm Wicks: Decisions which confirmed occupational group (and therefore liability) were originally taken by claims handlers. From late 2001, disputed Group 3 claims have been investigated by a separate team who have substantial direct mining experience. This team also reviewed all claims which were initially denied to ensure the correct liability decision had been made. I am confident that the significant experience of this team, amounting to some 1,300 years in total, has resulted in sound decisions on liability being made. There are dispute procedures where claimants think otherwise

Non-fossil Purchasing Agency

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what the size of the fund administered by Ofgem resulting from surplus revenue collected by the Non-Fossil Purchasing Agency has been in each year since 2001; how much and what percentage of the fund was invested to promote the use of renewable energy in each year; and for what purposes the remainder of the fund was allocated in each year; [2690]

(2) what estimate he has made of the surplus revenue to be collected by the Non-Fossil Purchasing Agency in the 2005–06 financial year; and what percentage of that revenue he plans to invest in the promotion of the use of renewable energy. [2691]

Malcolm Wicks: The size of the fund administered by Ofgem, resulting from surplus revenue collected by the Non-Fossil Purchasing Agency (NFPA), in each year since 2001 is as follows:

Year ending March	*Size of the fund (£ million)*
2001	63.8
2002	28.6
2003	87.1
2004	146.5
2005	169.1

Section 7 of the Sustainable Energy Act 2003 authorised the transfer of £60 million on 14 July 2004 for the support of renewable energy projects. This £60 million forms part of the £500 million that the Government are spending on R and D and capital grants for emerging renewable and low carbon technologies between 2002 and 2008. The remainder will be returned to the Consolidated Fund, which is held by HM Treasury, subject to the need to keep a £30 million reserve.

In its business plan, the NFPA projected a forecast surplus of about £100 million for the financial year 2005–06. This would increase the fund to approx. £270 million by the end of March 2006 if no further distribution were made from the fund during this year.

Nuclear Industry

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether consent from the Scottish Executive is required for nuclear generation stations to be built or extended in Scotland. [R] [530]

Malcolm Wicks: Yes.

Sellafield

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the safety implications of the recent leak at the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant at Sellafield; and when the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate is expected to make its report on the leak. [2688]

Malcolm Wicks: British Nuclear Group informed the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Nuclear Installations Inspectorate on 20 April of a leak of dissolved spent fuel, resulting from a failure in the pipework within the Feed Clarification Cell in the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant (THORP). Material leaked within THORP into a fully enclosed stainless steel clad cell designed to safely contain such leakages. The plant is in a safe and stable state. There has been no release of radioactivity from THORP and there is no risk to employees, the local community or the environment.

Safety is the key priority and British Nuclear Group Sellafield Ltd. is working to recover the liquid in a safe and controlled manner. HSE has been kept informed throughout.

BNGSL issued a press statement outlining the findings of the internal inquiry which may be found at http://www.britishnucleargroup.com/index.aspx?page=30.

HSE is carrying out its own independent investigation, the findings of which it will make public. Because of the wide range and complexity of the investigation it is not yet known when the findings will be reported.

Strategic Petroleum and Oil Reserves

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from the petroleum supply industry concerning the security of supply and strategic reserves. [2662]

Malcolm Wicks: The UK is obliged as a member state of the European Union to hold emergency stocks of oil and as a member of the International Energy Agency to take part in any collective response to a major international supply disruption. These stocks are held by companies. My Department held a public consultation in 2003 and 2004 seeking views on the future of the UK's system for meeting these obligations so as to ensure long-term security of supply, and has been working with the industry since then to agree a basis for the new system.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total overtime *(a)* worked and *(b)* paid has been at the Child Support Agency for each reporting period since 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [975]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws, dated 9 June 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the total overtime *(a)* worked and *(b)* paid has been at the Child Support Agency for each reporting period since 2003–04; and if he will make a statement.

The table below shows actual expenditure incurred on overtime in the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05.

Details on actual hours worked can be accessed through specific payroll interrogation and can only be provided at a disproportionate cost. However we can provide an estimate of the total hours worked based on reasonable assumptions around grade and salaries. This estimate is shown in the table below.

	Number of overtime hours worked	*Total overtime expenditure (£ million)*
2003–04	400,000	5.665
2004–05	385,000	5.871

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the *(a)* costs in staff time and *(b)* other costs of the delayed introduction of CS2 at the Child Support Agency; and if he will make a statement. [977]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws, dated 9 June 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the extra costs in *(a)* staff time and *(b)* other costs of the delayed introduction of CS2 at the Child Support Agency; and if he will make a statement.

An exercise is underway to collect information on the costs of delay that will form part of commercial negotiations with EDS. Following conclusion of these commercial discussions a paper on the costs of delay will be submitted to the Work and Pensions Select Committee.

Economic Inactivity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research he has collated on international variations in the proportion of economic inactivity in the labour force due to claims for illness and disability; and if he will make a statement. [957]

Margaret Hodge: Internationally comparable data on the proportion of economic inactivity due to sickness and disability are not available. However, cross-country comparisons of economic inactivity and sickness and disability benefit receipt are available separately and are set out in the tables.

The UK has one of the lowest economic inactivity rates in the OECD. Among the G7 countries, the UK has the second lowest economic inactivity rate after Canada.

Table 1: Economic inactivity rates in the G7

	Economic inactivity rate (percentage) persons 15–64
Canada	21.9
France	31.8
Germany	28.7
Italy	38.4
Japan	27.7
UK	23.4
US	24.2
OECD average	30.2

Source:
OECD Employment Outlook 2004
Figures for 2003

International comparisons of benefit receipt are difficult to make because of differences in benefit design, definitions of disability and demographics. However, the available evidence shows that the proportion of working age people in the UK in receipt of sickness and disability benefits is around the OECD average of 7 per cent.

Table 2: Recipients of sickness and disability benefits in 16 OECD countries

	Proportion of the working age population in receipt of sickness and disability benefits (percentage)
Japan	3
New Zealand	4
Spain	4
Belgium	5
Canada	5
Austria	5
Ireland	6
Australia	6
Germany	7
France	7
UK	7
US	8
Slovak Republic	9
Netherlands	11
Denmark	11
Sweden	12

Source:
OECD Employment Outlook 2003
Figures for 1999

Progress has been made on inactivity in the UK, including among the sick and disabled, though we acknowledge the need to do more. The Department for Work and Pensions Five Year Strategy sets out our intentions to help those people on incapacity benefits to get the support they need to return to work. We are extending employment opportunities more widely, not just to the unemployed, but to those jobless people previously outside the labour market altogether.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average length of time for an appeal by a claimant against a decision on non-entitlement to incapacity benefit to be heard was in each of the last 10 years. [1266]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* This is a matter for Christina Townsend, Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Mr. Frank Field, dated 9 June 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding what the average length of time for an appeal by a claimant against a decision on non-entitlement to incapacity benefit to be heard was in each of the last 10 years.

The information you have asked for is not available in the format requested as data on incapacity benefit is only collated since 2000. The table below, therefore, only shows the average length of time for an incapacity benefit appeal to be heard since 2000.

Average time (in weeks) for an incapacity benefit appeal from receipt at the Appeals Service to first hearing

	weeks *Average time*
January 2000 to December 2000	12.15
January 2001 to December 2001	10.88
January 2002 to December 2002	9.60
January 2003 to December 2003	8.86
January 2004 to December 2004	8.20

Notes:
1. No incapacity benefit figures are available prior to 2000.
2. All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
3. Figures for the latest months may change as further information feeds through to the Appeals Service.
4. Figures are rounded to two decimal places.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. Sample.

I hope this reply is helpful.

MG Rover

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether members of the MG Rover pension fund will be eligible for assistance from the pension protection scheme. [60]

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the application of the Pension Protection Fund for former workers at MG Rover. [215]

Mr. Timms: The Pension Protection Fund (PPF) will protect members of defined benefit schemes by paying compensation if their employer becomes insolvent and the pension scheme is underfunded.

We are very aware that this is a worrying time for Rover workers but pensioners are currently receiving their pensions in full and we believe it remains a question of when, not if, a PPF assessment period will start. At the moment, the Rover schemes have not yet entered an assessment period because one of the participating employers is still solvent.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the application of the Pension Protection Fund from early retired Rover workers who worked for Rover while it was run by Phoenix Venture Holdings. [216]

Mr. Timms: We are very aware that this is a worrying time for Rover workers but pensioners are currently receiving their pensions in full and we believe it remains a question of when, not if, a PPF assessment period will start. At the moment the Rover schemes have not yet entered an assessment period because one of the participating employers is still solvent.

The Pension Protection Fund provides 90 per cent. level of compensation for those members who, immediately before the assessment date, are under the scheme's normal pension age. This includes early retirees. However, those members who took early retirement, but have then reached the scheme's normal pension age before the assessment date, will receive 100 per cent. level of compensation.

The compensation cap applies to all members who receive 90 per cent. level of compensation. The compensation cap is age related and is currently £27,777.78 at age 65 (effectively £25,000 at 90 per cent.

level). The compensation cap is adjusted, according to age, in accordance with actuarial factors published by the board of the PPF.

There are two groups of individuals who, regardless of age, are not subject to the 90 per cent. compensation level; individuals who, before the assessment date, are already in receipt of a survivors' pension and those in receipt of an early pension on the grounds of ill health.

Motability Scheme

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to allow disability living allowance benefits to be used for transport support without automatic link to Motability programmes. [2774]

Mrs. McGuire: People entitled to the disability living allowance higher rate mobility component may, if they so choose, use it to obtain a vehicle through the Motability scheme, but they are not obliged to do so and may use the benefit to help with their mobility or transport needs in any way that they wish.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what role his Department played in developing new dealer accreditation arrangements for the Motability scheme. [2775]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department played no role in the development of new dealer accreditation standards for the Motability Powered Wheelchair and Scooter Scheme. The scheme is directed and overseen by the charity, Motability, and is operated by a private company, route2mobility Ltd. under contract to Motability. The dealer accreditation and other arrangements under which the scheme operates are matters for Motability and route2mobility within the overall scheme objective of providing consistent value and customer service to disabled people using the scheme.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of wheelchair and scooter suppliers able to provide a UK-wide service under the new dealer accreditation arrangements for the Motability scheme. [2776]

Mrs. McGuire: There are currently some 10 wheelchair and scooter suppliers who are potentially able to provide a UK-wide service under the new dealer accreditation arrangements for the Motability Scheme.

Occupation Supports Participation

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to implement the recommendations in the report Occupation Supports Participation; and if he will make a statement. [2723]

Mrs. McGuire: The report "Occupation Supports Participation" was produced by a joint Department for Work and Pensions/Department of Health Working Group of expertise from the voluntary, private and public sectors.

The report put forward a number of recommendations to improve employment opportunities for people with a learning disability. It fulfils a commitment in the White Paper "Valuing People" and officials from DWP have recently met with the National Director of the Valuing People Support Team to discuss how the recommendations can be implemented.

The Government are firmly committed to improving the employment opportunities of disabled people.

Pensioner Poverty

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of UK pensioners living in absolute poverty for each year from 1985–86 to 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [869]

Mr. Timms: The sixth annual 'Opportunity for all' report (Cm 6239) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of measures.

There is no fully consistent time series using a single data source for the number of pensioners below low income thresholds since 1985–86.

Information for 1994–95 to 2003–04 is presented in the following table:

Number of pensioners with income below 60 per cent. of contemporary median and 1996–97 median income

	(Relative) after housing costs	*(Absolute) after housing costs*
1994–95	2.7	3.1
1995–96	2.6	3.1
1996–97	2.8	2.8
1997–98	2.7	2.6
1998–99	2.7	2.4
1999–2000	2.6	2.0
2000–01	2.5	1.6
2001–02	2.3	1.2
2002–03	2.3	1.0
2003–04	2.0	0.9

Note:
Table shows number of pensioner population in millions.
Source:
Households Below Average Income 2003/04

Further information showing the proportion and number of pensioners living in low income households, including annual levels, can be found in the publication 'Households Below Average Income 1994/95–2003/04', a copy of which can be found in the House of Commons Library. This also reports changes between 1987 and 1995–96, using the data source and income definitions previously employed for the 'Households Below Average Income' series.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum and Immigration

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of migrants who apply for refugee status and for whom it is determined that they do not qualify, have been removed from the UK since May 2004; and what the average time between refusal and removal was over that period. [661]

Mr. McNulty: It is not possible to know exactly what proportion of applications made since May 2004 will prove to be unfounded, or will eventually result in removal.

Information on the numbers of asylum applications and removals of failed asylum seekers is published in the quarterly asylum statistics on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many accommodation centres for asylum seekers other than that proposed at Bicester he expects to be built over the next five years. [666]

Mr. McNulty: We do not expect to build any further accommodation centres over the next five years.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what he expects the average cost will be of processing an applicant for refugee status at the proposed accommodation centre for asylum seekers at Bicester. [669]

Mr. McNulty: The average cost will depend on the throughput time, which will depend on a number of factors including the mix of cases and asylum intake at the time, which cannot yet be established. The accommodation centre near Bicester is a trial of a new approach to support applicants through the asylum process; costs of processing will be one factor considered in the evaluation of that trial.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the average cost of processing applications by migrants claiming refugee status to determine whether they are entitled to refugee status. [697]

Mr. McNulty: Unit cost data prepared by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate was published in the National Audit Office report, "Improving the Speed and Quality of Asylum Decisions" (HC 535, 23 June 2004). This shows that the estimated average cost of processing an application for asylum (including initial screening) in 2002–03 was £1,850. These figures do not include the costs of asylum appeals, legal aid, or the cost of supporting asylum seekers awaiting a decision on their application.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to end the practice of detaining asylum seekers in prisons in Northern Ireland. [2223]

Mr. McNulty: We have no plans to end the current arrangements for immigration detainees in Northern Ireland. Male detainees continue to be accommodated at the Northern Ireland Prison Service's Working Out Unit in Belfast. Female immigration detainees are accommodated at the Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Prison. There is a presumption in all cases that individuals detained in Northern Ireland will be transferred to a removal centre in Great Britain unless they express a wish to remain in Northern Ireland.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers were detained in prisons in Northern Ireland in each of the past three years; what the average period of detention in each case was; and from which country each asylum seeker orginated. [2224]

Mr. McNulty: At present the Home Office does not hold information on asylum seekers detained over a period. Quarterly snapshots are published showing the number of people detained under Immigration Act powers on the last Saturday of each quarter. The number of asylum seekers detained in Northern Ireland prisons on the last Saturday of each of the last three years, and the length of time they have been in detention, are shown in the following tables. The asylum seekers in these figures were nationals of one of the following countries: Algeria, China, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Thailand. Information on persons detained solely under Immigration Act powers is published on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate web site at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Persons recorded as being in detention in Northern Ireland solely under Immigration Act powers as at the given date[1, 2]

	Number of asylum seekers[3]
28 December 2002	5
27 December 2003	*
25 December 2004	*

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest 5, with * = 1 or 2, and exclude persons detained in police cells and those in dual detention.

[2] Figures from 28 December 2002 and 27 December 2003 are not directly comparable with 25 December 2004 due to a past undercount of immigration detainees held in all UK prisons. The number of detainees not previously counted was approximately 250 (as at end September 2004).

[3] Persons detained under Immigration Act powers who are recorded as having sought asylum at some stage.

Total persons recorded as being in detention in Northern Ireland solely under Immigration Act powers on 28 December 2002, 27 December 2003 and 25 December 2004, by length of detention[1, 2, 3, 4]

	Number of asylum seekers[5]
14 days or less	—
15 to 29 days	—
1 month to less than 2 months	*
2 months to less than 3 months	—
3 months to less than 4 months	
4 months to less than 6 months	—
6 months to less than 1 year	5
1 year or more	—

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest 5, with * = 1 or 2, and exclude persons detained in prisons or police cells, and those in dual detention.

[2] Figures from 28 December 2002 and 27 December 2003 are not directly comparable with 25 December 2004 due to a past undercount of immigration detainees held in all UK prisons. The number of detainees not previously counted was approximately 250 (as at end September 2004).

[3] Relates to current period of detention only.

[4] 2 months is defined as 61 days; 4 months is defined as 122 days; 6 months is defined as 182 days.

[5] Persons detained under Immigration Act powers who are recorded as having sought asylum at some stage.

Citizenship Ceremonies

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many citizenship ceremonies have taken place in Northern Ireland since their introduction; how many people have become British subjects as a result; and whether citizenship ceremonies taking place in Northern Ireland follow the same format as those taking place elsewhere in the UK. [2268]

Mr. McNulty: 13 ceremonies have taken place in Northern Ireland since their introduction. 216 adults became British citizens as a result of attending those ceremonies, which were also attended by 43 minors who were registered as British citizens in line with their parents.

Citizenship ceremonies taking place in Northern Ireland follow the same format as those taking place elsewhere in the UK, and are administered by the Lords Lieutenant on a rotational basis.

Class A Drugs (Teenagers)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many teenagers in the London borough of Haringey he estimates have tried class A drugs in the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [2897]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office does not have drug use data broken down to the level of individual boroughs. Neither the survey of smoking, drinking and drug use amongst secondary school children nor the British Crime Survey, which are both used to measure drug use by young people, are able to provide estimates at this level. The most recent estimates of young people's drug use at the national level can be found in the 2004 headline figures of the survey of smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England (published in March 2005) and 'Drug Misuse Declared: findings from the 2003–04 British Crime Survey' (published in May 2005).

Drug-related Crime (Haringey)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of crime in the London borough of Haringey was deemed to be drug-related in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [2898]

Paul Goggins: Recorded crime figures are used to measure the extent of crime in local areas. Although these include statistics on drugs offences—such as possession—and on property crimes—such as burglary—they do not contain information on the offender's drug habits. It is therefore not possible to estimate from these statistics the numbers of crimes in Haringey that are drug-related.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to publish his Department's appraisal of the biometrics technology for identity cards and the cost-benefits analysis of the introduction of identity cards prior to the Second Reading of the Identity Cards Bill. [2075]

Mr. McNulty: The report of the UK Passport Service Biometrics Enrolment Trial was published on 25 May 2005. The objective of the trial was to test the processes, and record customer experience and attitude during the recording and verification of facial, iris and fingerprint biometrics. The trial was not aimed at testing the biometric technology. The latest information on costs and benefits of the identity cards scheme is contained in the Regulatory Impact Assessment which was published alongside the Identity Cards Bill on 25 May 2005. Copies of both the Biometric Enrolment Trial Report and the Regulatory Impact Assessment are available on the identity cards website www.identitycards.gov.uk.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list each category of information planned to be held on the identity card registry. [2157]

Mr. McNulty: The information that may be held on the national identity register is strictly limited by the Identity Cards Bill. It is listed in Schedule 1 to the Bill and includes name, address, nationality, date and place of birth as well as biometric information.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to consult the Civil Registration Service on his proposals for identity cards; and if he will make a statement. [3028]

Mr. McNulty: Consultation is continuing with relevant stakeholders who have an interest in the proposals for identity cards.

Identity Checks (Heathrow)

Mark Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the performance of *(a)* the national automated fingerprint identification system and *(b)* the iris-check computer at London Heathrow airport. [1202]

Mr. McNulty: All information technology solutions provided by the Home Office are subject to review to ensure that they continue to meet the business needs and requirements for which they were established.

The last review of national automated fingerprint identification system (known as IDENT1 from 1 April 2005) was completed in April 2005.

IRIS (iris records immigration system) is being introduced as a secure, automated border entry system using iris recognition technology. IRIS has passed confidence testing and is currently being trialled and evaluated in situ at Heathrow Terminals 2 and 4. Live trials will commence later in the summer. Once completed the live trials will be evaluated before a decision is made about introducing the system to eight other airport terminals throughout the United Kingdom.

Identity Theft

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to tackle identity theft; and if he will make a statement. [2143]

Mr. McNulty: The Government have reintroduced to Parliament the Identity Cards Bill, which makes provision for a national identity cards scheme to provide people with a highly secure means of protecting their identity. The Identity Cards Bill also includes a proposed new offence of being in possession or control of false identity documents, without reasonable cause.

Alongside the work on identity cards, the Home Office, in collaboration with other Government Departments and private sector organisations, has set up the Identity Fraud Steering Committee to lead a cross public/private sector work programme to tackle identity theft and identity fraud. The programme co-ordinates existing activity in the public and private sectors and identifies new projects and initiatives to reduce identity crime. The Committee has set up a website—www.identitytheft.org.uk—which explains how to keep personal information safe, how to get help if one is the victim of identity theft, and what is being done to tackle this growing crime.

The UK Passport Service has deployed a database of lost and stolen passports which is being shared with border authorities and police worldwide to prevent identity fraud. It is also piloting a system to undertake more background checks on passport applications.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 changed the law to align the penalty associated with fraudulently obtaining a driving licence with that for fraudulently obtaining a passport and made these arrestable offences. Fraudulently obtaining either document incurs a maximum penalty of two years' imprisonment.

Illegal Employment

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many employers have been prosecuted for employing people who are in the country illegally in each of the last five years. [739]

Mr. McNulty: The data contained in the table gives the number of defendants proceeded against for "Employing a person subject to immigration control who has attained the age of 16" under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, Sec. 8, England and Wales 1999 to 2003.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2004 will be published in the autumn.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts under Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, Sec. 8, England and Wales 1999 to 2003[1]

	Proceeded against
1999	4
2000	10
2001	5
2002	2
2003	2

[1] These data are on the principal immigration offence basis.

Immigration

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for Indefinite Leave to Remain from failed asylum seekers who were granted Exceptional Leave to Remain are awaiting a decision by his Department; and if he will make a statement. [54]

Mr. McNulty: 12,785 applications for Indefinite Leave to Remain made by people previously granted Exceptional Leave to Remain are currently awaiting decision in Managed Migration.

Immigration Appeals Tribunal

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what account he takes of determinations by the Immigration Appeals Tribunal that a case has no merit when he is required to reconsider that case on grounds wider than those on which the Tribunal has considered it. [2070]

Mr. McNulty: Cases are reconsidered on the basis of all the available evidence. This will include determinations by the Immigration Appeals Tribunal if they are relevant to the new evidence.

Migrant Workers

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his plans to prevent the abuse and exploitation of migrant workers in the UK. [1374]

Mr. McNulty: The Government take very seriously the abuse and exploitation of migrant workers. Our strategy for dealing with this problem includes tackling human trafficking as a priority for our presidency of the European Union, strengthening the legislative framework, improving the security of administrative processes governing the entry of migrant workers, increasing enforcement action, and developing closer working between departments responsible for enforcing workplace regulations. We have introduced a new criminal offence of trafficking for the purpose of exploitation, including forced labour, punishable on conviction by a maximum of 14 years' imprisonment. We supported the legislation establishing the Gangmaster Licensing Authority, which will tackle illegal employment practices in the agricultural labour provision sector through statutory licensing. We will also introduce on the spot penalties for employers found to be using illegal migrant workers.

The current work permit arrangements include checks to ensure work permit applicants are protected from potentially exploitative employment arrangements, and investigations are carried out where there is intelligence of abuse. We are also improving joint working across departmental boundaries. The Home Office is a key participant in Reflex, the multi-agency initiative created to tackle organised immigration crime, including people smuggling and human trafficking. We will also pilot a joint team in the West Midlands to examine the scope for closer co-operation between workplace enforcement agencies in relation to the use and exploitation of illegal migrant workers.

Online Identity Verification

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the user organisations for online identity inquiries with which his Department is having discussions; and if he will list *(a)* other potential users and *(b)* the locations where he envisages online inquiry facilities (i) with and (ii) without the ability to check a person's biometric data which will be available (A) for Government use and (B) for use by other organisations. [1786]

Mr. McNulty: Identity cards will provide a convenient and secure way for individuals to prove their identity and, with their consent, for identity verification checks to be made by a range of potential public and private sector users. The Identity Cards Programme Team have had discussions with a number of public sector organisations including: Cabinet Office, Department for Constitutional Affairs, Department for Education and Skills, Department of Transport, Department of Health, DVLA, Department for Work and Pensions, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Her Majesty's Treasury, Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Criminal Records Bureau, Local Government Association, Northern Ireland Office, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Office for National Statistics, E-Government Unit, Association of Chief Police Officers, Scottish Executive, National Assembly for Wales and United Kingdom Passport Service. The Identity Cards Programme Team has also briefed representatives from the private sector including the banking, utilities, aviation and retail sectors.

In all cases, verification checks of cards will not give access to the contents of the database or the details of the biometric. They will simply confirm identity and other relevant details, for example to confirm whether a foreign national is free to take employment.

It is too early for any detailed discussions on the locations at which identity checks will be carried out and where they will involve biometric checks.

Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many groups *(a)* were nominated for and *(b)* received The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service; and how many represented ethnic minority groups in each case. [1991]

Paul Goggins: 617 groups were nominated for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2005, of which 580 were eligible. 92 groups received The Queen's Award. 44 of the eligible nominations represented ethnic minority groups and 11 of those received The Queen's Award.

Security Industry Authority

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people with serious criminal records have been granted a licence by the Security Industry Authority once the five-year period has elapsed after the date of their last offence. [1603]

Paul Goggins: This information is not held centrally.

Traffic Wardens

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many traffic wardens there are in the East Midlands region. [2014]

Paul Goggins: The latest available information on the number of traffic wardens employed by police authorities in the East Midlands is in the following table. The table does not include parking attendants employed by local authorities to enforce non-criminal parking infringements.

Number of traffic wardens in the East Midlands as at 31 December 2004

Force	*Total strength (Q)(full-time equivalent)*	*Total strength (Q(head count)*
Derbyshire	42.04	43
Leicestershire	33.95	35
Lincolnshire	21.25	22
Northamptonshire	2.78	4
Nottinghamshire	34.79	37
Total	134.81	141

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

EU Legislation

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the procedure by which Parliament will assess whether EU legislation complies with the subsidiarity principle. [1653]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government believe that it is for the two Houses to decide what parliamentary procedures would be most effective to implement the subsidiarity early warning mechanism as envisaged in the new constitutional treaty. The Government are aware that the House of Lords European Union Committee has produced a report on the subsidiarity early warning mechanism, for which the Foreign Secretary provided a memorandum on 3 November 2004, and the Select Committee on the Modernisation of the House of Commons and the European Scrutiny Committee have also considered this issue. The Government hope that cooperation between the two Houses on working out an effective procedure for the subsidiarity mechanism, in consultation with the devolved legislatures as appropriate, will continue.

EU Presidency

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what the budget allocation for the presidency unit is for 2005–06, broken down by *(a)* activity and *(b)* budget line; [1807]

(2) what the estimated spending on official meetings from the budget for UK presidency of the EU is, including the Gymnich and European Councils. [1810]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The initial budget allocation for the presidency unit in 2005–06 is £8.44 million. This breaks down as follows:

Official meetings (including the Gymnich at £1.1 million and two European Councils totalling £2 million)	£5.08 million
Administration (including human resources and training)	£2.726 million
Official presidency website (including translation costs)	£200,000
Public information and communication	£250,000
Capital costs (including capital charges)	£182,000

There is likely to be some variation in final spending patterns and exact individual costs.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the estimated spending on the UK presidency of the EU is, broken down by activity; and how much has been spent to date. [1809]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Expected spending over the 18-month planning period and the six-month operational period of the presidency currently breaks down as follows:

Official meetings (including the Gymnich and European Councils)	£5.91 million
Administration (including human resources and training)	£3.85 million
Official presidency website	£388,000
Public information and communication	£350,000
Total provisional budget	£10.56 million

Spend to the end of March 2004–05 is currently costed at £1.97 million. Year-end accounts are currently being finalised and this figure is subject to change.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the Government's priorities for the UK presidency of the EU. [1897]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* Europe is facing a series of challenges: emerging competition in global markets; new threats to our security; climate change and inequality between rich and poor. The Government's priorities for the UK presidency will focus on:

economic reform, as my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer set out in his written statement to the House on 26 May, we will aim to help equip Europe to meet the global economic challenge by pushing forward the Better Regulation agenda, the Lisbon agenda and moving forward the post Financial Services Action Plan agenda, *Official Report,* columns 23–24WS;

security, where we will follow up commitments in the EU's Counter Terrorism Action Plan and take forward key measures such as the European Evidence Warrant and data retention;

climate change, where we will co-ordinate EU strategy for the Montreal UN Climate Change conference; encourage technology to reduce emissions; begin work on developing consensus on the need to tackle aviation emissions in an economically efficient way and step up dialogue with China and India;

Africa, where we will take forward work on a higher EU aid target and the UN Millennium Summit; build on the Commission for Africa Report; and press at the Hong Kong World Trade Organisation ministerial meeting in December for better market access for the developing world.

I also refer the hon. Member to the statement my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made to the House on 6 June on the EU constitutional treaty, *Official Report,* columns 991–92.

Europe Directorate Budget

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much of the Europe Directorate Budget for *(a)* materials and *(b)* media relations for financial year 2004–05 has been spent, broken down by category of materials; and what future materials are planned. [1210]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: In 2004–05, approximately £425,000 was spent by the Europe Directorate on materials and media relations. From this about £150,000 was spent in preparation for the EU presidency and £270,000 on general EU communications.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Europe Directorate's contracts for *(a)* e-communications and *(b)* partnership marketing will extend beyond financial year 2004–05; what work on these activities has been completed; and what work is planned. [1211]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's contracts with two specialist agencies for e-communications and partnership marketing are set to continue for some of financial year 2005–06. Final decisions have not yet been made on communication activities relating to the EU constitutional treaty for financial year 2005–06.

European Constitution

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect of the qualified majority voting rules set out in the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe on the UK's power to block the adoption of legislation. [1651]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government do not believe the new voting arrangements in the EU constitutional treaty represent a significant change in the UK or other member states' powers to pass or block the adoption of legislation. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's commentary on the treaty (Cm. 6459) provides a detailed analysis of the changes in voting rules which would be introduced by the EU constitutional treaty if it were to come into force. In addition, the treaty would give national parliaments a direct say in the EU's law-making procedures for the first time.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the procedure is by which Parliament would approve a decision to move from unanimity to qualified majority voting under the procedures in Articles III-422.1, III-234, III-269.3, Article I-55.4, Article III-210.3, I-40.7 and Article III-300.3 of the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe. [1654]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made to the House on the EU constitutional treaty on 6 June 2005, *Official Report,* columns 991–92.

Article IV-444 of the constitutional treaty provides for changes to be made to the voting requirements or legislative procedure governing the articles in Part III that provide for the council to act by unanimity in a given area or case. These changes can only be made provided that member states support any such proposal unanimously, and that national parliaments have not registered their opposition. Article IV-444 would apply in respect of the changes envisaged in Articles III-422.1, III-234, III-269.3, III-210.3, and III-300.3.

Clause 2 of the EU Bill, as introduced to the House of Commons on 24 May. Proposes a mechanism by which the UK Parliament will be able to approve or oppose any proposed change under Article IV-444. Under clause 2, the House of Lords will be given 20 days to provide an opinion on any proposal, after which the House of Commons will debate whether or not to approve the proposal. This mechanism is designed to ensure that the elected chamber has the final judgement on any proposal, but that the view of the House of Lords is able to inform the debate in the Commons.

The legislative procedure governing Articles 1–40.7 and 1–55.4 can only move to qualified majority voting if this is agreed unanimously by all the member states. Clause 2 does not apply to these Articles.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the operation of articles *(a)* III-422.1, *(b)* III-234, *(c)* III-269.3, *(d)* I-55.4, *(e)* III-210.3, *(f)* I-40.7 and *(g)* III-300.3 of the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe. [1655]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made to the House on the EU constitutional treaty on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 991–92.

The operation of the articles in question is explained in the commentary on the EU constitutional treaty published on 26 January (Cm. 6459).

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what budget has been set for informing the public about the EU, including the proposed EU constitutional treaty, for financial year 2005–06, broken down by category of activity. [1178]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made to the House on the EU constitutional treaty on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 991–92.

No final decisions have yet been made on general communication activities on the EU and the EU constitutional treaty for financial year 2005–6. There is a separate budget of £200,000 for financial year 2005–06 for communicating the UK presidency of the EU to the British public.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to decide whether to distribute the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe to every household in advance of the referendum on UK ratification. [1213]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made to the House on the EU constitutional treaty on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 991–92.

No final decisions have yet been made on communication activities on the EU constitutional treaty for financial year 2005–06.

Malaysia

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the human rights compliance of the *(a)* immigration and *(b)* labour policies of Malaysia. [1856]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 8 June 2005]:* Aspects of the Malaysian Government's recent efforts to curb large-scale illegal immigration, which has had a direct and negative impact on the Malaysian labour market, have given rise to potential human rights concerns. EU Missions in Malaysia are monitoring the situation and have supported the efforts of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to minimise the impact of Malaysia's immigration policies on vulnerable groups. Following assurances from the Malaysian Government, EU Missions and UNHCR have agreed to delay making further representations to see if these assurances will be honoured. Conditions for refugees in detention centres remain a cause for concern, but the Malaysian Government is currently considering recommendations for improvements made by the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia. The British high commissioner in Kuala Lumpur continues to take appropriate opportunities to address human rights issues with the Malaysian Government, and will continue to monitor the situation closely.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Cleaning Machines

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many street cleaning machines were used by each London borough in the last year for which figures are available. [2466]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Prime Minister does not hold this information.

Community Warden Schemes

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list local authorities that run a community warden scheme; how many wardens are employed by each local authority; and which local authority wardens have received accreditation from the area chief constable under powers provided by the Police Reform Act 2002. [2922]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has provided 142 local authorities with pilot funding for 207 neighbourhood warden schemes, a list of how many wardens this has funded is as follows. We do not hold information on how many wardens schemes are accredited under the community safety accreditation scheme.

Local authority	*Total number of:* *Schemes*	*Wardens*
Allerdale DC	4	32
Amber Valley BC	5	28
Avon and Somerset DC	2	7
Barnsley MBC	3	25
Bedford BC	3	31
Birmingham city council	2	20
Blackpool DC	2	21
Bolton MBC	3	31
Boston BC	3	24
Bradford CC	3	26
Bristol CC	3	23
Burnley BC	2	15
Bury MBC	3	20
Caerphilly CC	2	14
Calderdale CC	2	12
Cambridge CC	4	26
Cannock Chase DC	4	23
Canterbury CC	3	14
Charnwood BC	2	17
Cherwell DC	1	14
Chester CC	1	12
City of Swansea	2	15

	Total number of:	
Local authority	*Schemes*	*Wardens*
Colchester BC	1	11
Congleton BC	2	20
Cornwall MBC	1	10
Coventry city council	1	10
Dacorum BC	1	10
Darlington CC	1	10
Dartford BC	1	9
Derby BC	1	9
District of Bolsover	2	11
Doncaster MBC	2	16
Easington DC	1	8
Eastbourne BC	1	8
Exeter CC	1	8
Gateshead MBC	1	7
Gosport BC	1	7
Great Yarmouth CC	1	7
Guildford BC	3	10
Gwynedd CC	2	13
Hastings BC	2	7
Horsham DC	2	20
Hull City Council	1	6
Huntingdonshire DC	1	6
Ipswich BC	1	6
Kerrier CC	2	10
Kirklees BC	2	8
Knowle West MBC	2	7
Knowsley BC	2	8
Lancaster City Council	1	5
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	1	5
London Borough of Barnet	1	5
London Borough of Basildon	1	5
London Borough of Brent	1	5
London Borough of Camden	1	5
London Borough of Croydon	1	5
London Borough of Ealing	2	6
London Borough of Greenwich	2	6
London Borough of Hackney	1	4
London Borough of Hackney	1	4
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	1	4
London Borough of Haringey	1	4
London Borough of Harrow	1	4
London Borough of Hillingdon	1	4
London Borough of Hounslow	1	4
London Borough of Islington	2	7
London Borough of Lewisham	2	11
London Borough of Merton	1	3
London Borough of Newham	1	3
London Borough of Redbridge	1	3
London Borough of Southwark	2	10
London Borough of Streatham	1	2
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	1	2
London Borough of Walthamstow	1	2
London Borough of Wandsworth	1	2
London Borough of Westminster	1	2
London Borough of Havering	1	2
Leeds City Council	1	2
Leicester City Council	1	2
Lincolnshire DC	1	1
Liverpool City Council	1	1
Luton BC	1	10
Macclesfield DC	1	3
Malvern Hills DC	1	8
Manchester MBC	1	4
Mansfield DC	5	41
Merthyr Tydfil County BC	3	25
Middlesbrough BC	2	10
Milton Keynes Council	2	18
Newark and Sherwood DC	2	9
Newcastle CC	2	19
North Tyneside DC	1	8
Northumberland CC	1	9
Norwich City Council	1	12
Nottingham City Council	1	8
Oldham BC	1	14
Oxford DC	1	12
Peterborough BC	1	12
Portsmouth City Council	1	10
Preston DC	1	10
Reading BC	1	10
Redcar and Cleveland DC	1	10
Rotherham BC	1	10
Royal borough of Kingston	1	12
Salford City Council	2	6
Sandwell MBC	1	4
Sedgefield DC	1	12
Sevenoaks DC	1	3
Sheffield CC	1	3
Slough BC	1	7
Solihull MBC	1	2
South Gloucestershire CC	1	1
South Kesteven CC	1	3
South Manchester	1	3
South Tyneside Council	1	4
Stevenage Borough Council	1	1
Stockport MBC	1	1
Stockton DC	1	2
Stoke on Trent City Council	1	6
Sunderland BC	1	3
Sutton DC	1	8
Swindon BC	1	4
Tameside MBC	1	6
Tamworth BC	1	11
Test Valley BC	1	6
Thanet CC	1	1
Thurrock Council	1	1
Torbay CC	1	10
Trafford MBC	1	6
Vale of White Horse DC	1	4
Vale Royal BC	1	8
Wakefield DC	1	1
Walsall MBC	1	8
Wealdon DC	1	9
Wear Valley DC	1	5
Welwyn Hatfield DC	1	3
West Bromwich BC	1	4
West Lancashire DC	1	4
Wigan BC	1	4
Wirral DC	1	10
Wolverhampton MBC	1	4
Wyre Forest DC	1	2
Total	207	1306

Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which consultants have been employed by his Department in each of the last three years. [901]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed in May 2002. For the period 2002 to 2004 information concerning the names of consultancy firms has not been held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. For the period 2004–05 this information is available and a list of the consultancies by name is as follows.

Consultancies used in 2004–05

Accenture
Adam Continuity Ltd.
AEA Technology
AKRONYM
Alpha Consolidated Training Ltd.
Amanda Rayner Images
AMTEC Consulting
Ascentia
Ask Europe Plc.
Assessment and Development
Consultants Ltd.
ATIS Real Weatherall
Atkins Management Consultants
Badenoch and Clark

Baker Associates
Bray Leino Learning Development
Soluction
Brian Lewis Arts Consultants
British Board of Agreement
Bucknall Austin Ltd.
Building Research Establishment
Butler and Young Ltd.
Cambridge Projects Ltd.
Campion Willcocks and Associates Limited,
Capita
Capita Symonds Ltd.
Capital Business Services Ltd.
CB Richard Ellis
CC(Computer) Consultants) Ltd.
CGEY
CgMs Ltd.
Cheshire County Council
Christina Stone
Cimtech Limited
Circle 33 Homeless Trust
Computer People
Cornwell Management Consultant
County Hall, Truro
David Cumberland Associates
Davis Langdon
DBI Consulting
Denton Wilde Sapte
Donaldsons
Doncaster MBC, St. James Court, Milton Walk, Doncaster, DN1 3QL
Dr. Giles Biddle
Drivers Jonas
DTZ
Eamonn Barclay Consulting
EC Harris
Edmund Kirby
EJIC
Electronic Commerce Associates Ltd.
Eliesha Training Ltd.
Emmerson Consulting Limited
Energy Auditing Agency
Epic Group Plc.
ESR (UK) Ltd.
EthoS Management Ltd.
Eunice Heaney
FBE Management Ltd.
Gardiner and Theobald LLP
Generic Software consultants
Geofutures Ltd.
Gerald Eve
GLAD
Goodband Viner Taylor
Greater London Authority
Greg Clark
GVA Grimley
HACK
Harries Associates
HEDRA
HeriodWatt University School of Built Environment
Housing Audit (Bob Lawrence)
Housing Diversity Services Ltd.
Informed Solutions
Interculture
Joint Centre for Scottish Housing Research
Kaleidoscope
Ken Baublys
KPMG
LA International Computer Consultance Ltd.
Lambert Smith Hampton
Living Over the Shop
Mann Weaver Drew
Mantix Ltd.
Martin Benham
Mary Gavin
MATRIX
McLane UK Ltd.
MDA
Metaskii
Methods
Michael Page
Milburn Trinnaman La Court
Mott Macdonald
Mouchel Parkman
Mr. Alan Engley
Mr. Brian Crane
Mr. David Houldershaw
Mr. David Thorman
Mr. Ian Murat
Mr. Jim Quaife
Mr. Jim Unwin
Mr. Jon Cocking
Mr. Jonathan Fulcher
Mr. Keith Rushforth
Mr. Mick Boddy
Mr. Simon Pryce
National Stone Centre
National Youth Agency
Nesco Group
NHF
Norfork County Council
North Face Ltd.
Northampton PCT
Northumberland County Council
Odgers Ray and Berndtson
OGC, Rosbury Court
OGC/SACS, Accounting Services
OPM
Ordnance Survey
Ospray Mott Macdonald
Ottaway Strategic Management
PA Consulting
Parker Bridge

Paul Davies
Peam Kandola
Peter Pendleton and Associates
PKF
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Proof Positive
Ridge and Partners
RMC Consultancy
Robert Walters
Russells Consultancy
Salford Council, Turnpike House, 631 Elles Road, Salford, M501SW
Scientia
Scott Wilson
Security and Standards Ltd.
SERCO
Share Intelligence
South East England Regional Assembly
Southwark, Shatelaine House, 186 Woolworth Road, London, SE17 1JJ
Starfish/Secta
Step Ahead Research Ltd.
Stephen F. Clarke
Sustainable Development Commission
Synergy Research and Consulting Ltd.
System Evolutif Ltd.
The Faraday Partnership
Three Dragon (LC) Ltd.
Tony Dallas
Tower and Hamlins
TQM
Tribal HCH
Turner and Townsend
Umbrella Ltd.
University College of London (UCL)
University of Bristol
University of Leeds
University of Reading in association with Ove Arup and Partners
University of West England
VOA, Financial Operation Unit
W B Gumy and Sons
Waltham Forest, Willow House, 869 Forest Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4UH
Warwich Research
Watts and Partners
WS Atkins
Xansa
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Environmental Health Officers (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many inspections were carried out by environmental health officers on food providers in each London borough in the last 12 months. [2489]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply. The information is not available for the period requested. Such information that is available is shown in the table.

Number of food hygiene inspections to food premises reported by local authorities to the Food Standards Agency for the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003[1]

London borough	*Number*
Barking and Dagenham	863
Barnet	1,746
Bexley	965
Brent	1,800
Bromley	1,865
Camden	2,508
City of London	1,718
Croydon	1,770
Ealing	1,872
Enfield	1,837
Greenwich[2]	331
Hackney	902
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,785
Haringey	2,427
Harrow	819
Havering	1,193
Hillingdon	1,383
Hounslow	1,141
Islington	1,588
Kensington and Chelsea	1,900
Kingston-Upon-Thames	718
Lambeth	1,617
Lewisham	1,791
Merton	1,065
Newham	1,761
Redbridge	1,411
Richmond-Upon-Thames	935
Southwark	2,156
Sutton	1,342
Tower Hamlets	1,730
Waltham Forest	1,114
Wandsworth	2,141
Westminster	3,594

[1] *Source:*

Food Standards Agency—Official Control Directive database. Data excludes inspections to vessels.

[2] London borough of Greenwich submitted partial data for the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003.

Fire Service

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Government will announce the location of the regional fire control rooms. [1110]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Kidney) on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 411W.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fire engines were *(a)* stolen, *(b)* lost and *(c)* vandalised in each year since 1997. [2444]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not available centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

High Hedges

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much each local authority in England plans to charge individuals to investigate high hedges complaints under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. [1622]

Yvette Cooper: This information is not collected centrally. Of the sample local authorities who have provided information to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the majority are setting fees within a range of £300-£400.

Housing

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people in Coventry South he estimates will benefit from his Department's extended home ownership programme. [2110]

Yvette Cooper: It is not possible to estimate at the moment how many people in Coventry South will benefit from the Government's proposals for low cost home ownership. The West Midlands Region has been allocated £379 million of funding for housing for the two years 2006–08 and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently awaiting Regional Housing Board recommendations as to how and where this should be invested. Once priorities for investment have been established, housing providers will be invited to bid for funding. The number of people in Coventry South who will benefit will depend on which bids are successful. In addition, the Government is currently consulting on details of social homebuy which will enable social tenants to buy a part share in their home.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research his Department has carried out to examine the environmental impact and sustainability of the house building programme in Sussex. [2624]

Yvette Cooper: Research needed to underpin the Sustainability Appraisal of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East, which will assess the environmental impact of the future level and distribution of house building in South East England is, in the first instance, the responsibility of the South East England regional assembly, with assistance from the county councils.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the amount of Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme funding and Challenge Fund spent on *(a)* mixed funded social rented housing, *(b)* temporary social rented housing, *(c)* homebuy general market purchase, *(d)* homebuy general new build, *(e)* mixed funded low cost home ownership for sale, *(f)* miscellaneous works to RSL stock, *(g)* reimprovements to rented RSL stock, *(h)* works only rehabilitation of rented RSL stock, *(i)* works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale, *(j)* intermediate rent for key workers, *(k)* homebuy market purchase for key workers, *(l)* homebuy new build for key workers and *(m)* mixed funded sale for key workers in the north west region in each year since 1997–98. [1250]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows funding through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme in the north west region for the categories *(a)* to *(i)*. The information in the table does not include all programmes that the ADP is used for and therefore does not represent the total funding for the north west region. Other categories with funding during the time period covered by the table are right to acquire, voluntary purchase grant, do-it-yourself shared ownership, and temporary intermediate and market rent housing.

The Key Worker Living programme is limited to London and the wider south east, therefore there is no investment in categories *(j)* to *(m)* in the north west through this programme.

The Challenge Fund was limited to London, south east and eastern regions, therefore there is no Challenge Fund expenditure in the north west.

Expenditure for the north west region from 1997–98 to 2004–05

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*£ million 2000–01*
(a) Mixed funded social rent	60.85	63.36	74.22	62.22
(b) Temporary social housing	2.73	0.39	1.37	1.20
(c) Homebuy market purchase	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.51
(d) Homebuy new build	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(e) Mixed-funded low cost home ownership	8.04	6.60	7.58	6.02
(f) Miscellaneous works	7.77	4.71	3.28	2.85
(g) Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	0.00	0.00	0.72	1.17
(h) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.13
(i) Works only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*£ million 2004–05*
(a) Mixed funded social rent	79.13	89.27	85.52	84.38
(b) Temporary social housing	1.13	0.64	0.24	0.84
(c) Homebuy market purchase	0.16	0.12	0.07	0.34
(d) Homebuy new build	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00
(e) Mixed-funded low cost home ownership	8.81	8.04	9.55	12.08
(f) Miscellaneous works	3.50	5.54	5.42	3.62
(g) Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	1.86	3.94	3.82	3.54
(h) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	0.34	2.50	1.95	2.74
(i) Works only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.32

Note:
Categories *(g)*, *(h)*, and (i) are included in miscellaneous works *(f)* for years 1997–98 and 1998–99.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable housing units built or procured through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme and Challenge Fund were *(a)* mixed funded social rented housing, *(b)* temporary social rented housing, *(c)* homebuy general market purchase, *(d)* homebuy general new build, *(e)* mixed funded low cost home ownership for sale, *(f)* miscellaneous works to RSL stock, *(g)* reimprovements to rented RSL stock, *(h)* works only rehabilitation of rented RSL stock, *(i)* works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale, *(j)* intermediate rent for key workers, *(k)* homebuy market purchase for key workers, *(l)* homebuy new build for key workers and *(m)* mixed funded sale for key workers in the north west region in each year since 1997–98. [1251]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows completions through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme in the north west region for the categories *(a)* to *(i)* . The information in the table does not include all programmes that the ADP is used for, and therefore does not represent the total completions for the region. Other categories with completions during the time period covered by the table are right to acquire, voluntary purchase grant, do-it-yourself shared ownership, and temporary intermediate and market rent housing.

The Key Worker Living programme is limited to London and the wider South East, therefore there is no investment in categories *(j)* to *(m)* in the north west through this programme.

The Challenge Fund was limited to London, South East and Eastern regions, therefore there are no Challenge Fund completions recorded for the north west.

Completions for the north west region from 1997–98 to 2004–05

	Units completed			
	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*
(a) Mixed funded Social Rent	2,932	3,191	2,724	2,580
(b) Temporary Social Rented Housing	253	222	123	48
(c) Homebuy market purchase	0	0	0	33
(d) Homebuy New Build	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(e) Mixed-funded Low Cost Home Ownership	552	676	428	395
(f) Miscellaneous Works	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(9) Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(h) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(i) Works only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	Units completed			
	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
(a) Mixed funded Social Rent	2,664	2,416	1,502	1,437
(b) Temporary Social Rented Housing	63	15	10	12
(c) Homebuy market purchase	9	6	4	12
(d) Homebuy New Build	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
(e) Mixed-funded Low Cost Home Ownership	436	383	355	424
(f) Miscellaneous Works	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(9) Re-improvements to rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(h) Works-only re-hab for rented RSL stock	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
(i) Works only re-hab of RSL stock for sale	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note:

Categories *(f)*, *(g)*, *(h)*, and *(i)* do not have complete records of units

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which of the sites released for new housing under the proposals announced on 25 May are in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood; and which of the latter are on green belt land. [2152]

Yvette Cooper: The announcement by my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer on 25 May referred to 700 sites currently entered on the register of surplus public sector land which is maintained by English Partnerships. The sites' owners and English Partnerships are currently reviewing all registered sites to assess their development potential. A list of the sites, as at March 2005, can be found on the English Partnerships website at: http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/images/16EE954C9Q4340DDAB44702EF5D2ADE6.pdf

51 sites on the Register as at March 2005 are situated in the Greater London area. One British Railways Boards (Residuary) Ltd. site at Harefield in the London borough of Hillingdon is located in Ruislip-Northwood. This site is classified as green belt land. An updated list of register sites will be published by English Partnerships towards the end of June 2005.

In addition, it was announced on 1 April that a portfolio of nearly one hundred ex-NHS sites, would be transferred from the Department of Health to English Partnerships. The first tranche of 67 sites transferred on 6 April. Work is ongoing with partners and local authorities to assess each site to identify how they can contribute to local housing and employment needs. It is estimated that the total portfolio of 96 sites could accommodate up to 15,000 new homes nationally, with at least 5,000 being affordable. This estimate is subject to planning permission for the individual sites, and residential development will not be appropriate on all of the sites.

John Hemming: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of the development he has planned for the South East is on flood plains. [1848]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister wish to see a reduction in the amount of inappropriate new development in flood risk areas. Local authorities should steer development away from areas at highest risk of flooding when allocating land in plans, and where development does proceed local authorities should ensure it is subject to appropriate precautionary measures. The susceptibility of land to flooding is a material consideration in determining planning applications. Policies are set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 25: "Development and Flood Risk".

The Environment Agency is monitoring data on land allocations made by local authorities in their plans for development inside and outside areas designated at risk of flooding in the South East. The latest figures are reported in the Environment Agency's State of the Environment 2004 report for the South East region and are likely to be updated as part of the next State of the Environment report.

Housing Officers (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many housing officers were employed by each London borough per 1,000 population in the last year for which figures are available. [2486]

Yvette Cooper: The information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Leisure Facilities (Brent)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment the Audit Commission has made of leisure facilities in Brent. [2509]

Mr. Woolas: This is an operational matter for the Audit Commission. I will ask the chief executive to write to the hon. Member and to ensure the answer is made available in the Library the House.

Libraries

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many public libraries are maintained by each London borough per 1,000 population; and what the total number of public libraries run by local authorities in London was in each year since 1997. [2483]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The figures for each borough, and the total number of libraries run by local authorities in London in each year since 1997 are set out as follows:

Number of libraries in London 1997–2004

	Static libraries	*Mobile libraries*	*Total*
1997	368	37	405
1998	370	36	406
1999	371	34	405
2000	369	33	402
2001	364	33	397
2002	363	32	397
2003	361	30	391
2004	365	30	395

Number of public libraries per 1,000 population in each London borough[1]

Borough	*Number of libraries*	*Borough population*	*Libraries per 1,000 people*	*People per library*
Barking and Dagenham	11	163,944	0.067	14,904
Barnet	17	314,564	0.054	18,503
Bexley	13	218,307	0.059	16,792
Brent	13	263,464	0.049	20,266
Bromley	18	295,532	0.060	16,418
Camden	13	198,020	0.065	15,232
City of London	5	7,185	0.692	1,437
Croydon	14	330,587	0.042	23,613
Ealing	12	300,948	0.039	25,079
Enfield	14	273,559	0.051	19,539
Greenwich	14	214,403	0.065	15,314
Hackney	7	202,824	0.034	28,974
Hammersmith and Fulham	6	165,242	0.036	27,540
Haringey	9	216,507	0.041	24,056
Harrow	11	206,814	0.053	18,801
Havering	10	224,248	0.044	22,424
Hillingdon	17	243,006	0.069	14,294
Hounslow	11	212,341	0.051	19,303
Islington	12	175,797	0.068	14,649
Kensington and Chelsea	6	158,919	0.037	26,486
Kingston Upon Thames	8	147,273	0.054	18,409
Lambeth	9	266,169	0.033	29,574
Lewisham	13	248,922	0.052	19,147
Merton	7	187,908	0.037	26,844
Newham	12	243,891	0.049	20,324
Redbridge	10	238,635	0.041	23,863
Richmond upon Thames	13	172,335	0.075	13,256
Southwark	14	244,866	0.057	17,490
Sutton	9	179,768	0.058	19,974
Tower Hamlets	10	196,106	0.050	19,610
Waltham Forest	12	218,341	0.054	18,195
Wandsworth	12	260,380	0.046	21,698
Westminster	12	181,286	0.066	15,107

[1] These figures do not include mobile libraries.

Litter

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authority maintained litterbins there were in each London borough in each of the last five years. [2477]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold this information.

Local Government (Advice Services)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was spent by each local authority on *(a)* in-house and *(b)* independent advice services in each year since 1997. [2421]

Mr. Woolas: This information is not centrally available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Overcrowding

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to change the statutory definition of overcrowding. [2432]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is considering the future of the statutory overcrowding standards and plans to publish a consultation paper in the near future.

Planning (Prosecutions)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people were prosecuted for planning irregularities in each London borough in the last five years. [2479]

Yvette Cooper: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Public Sector Land

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* size and *(b)* value was of the surplus brownfield public sector-owned land in England in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by local authority. [2459]

Yvette Cooper: Information from the National Land Use Database of Previously-Developed Land (NLUD-PDL) on the amounts of vacant or derelict land owned by local authorities and by other public sector bodies has been made available in the Library of the House. The information relates to 31 March 2004 except for a small number of local authorities where it is for an earlier year. Information on the value of the land is not available.

The Government also maintains a separate Register of Surplus Land held by central departments and their sponsored bodies, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. This is likely to cover some of the same land recorded as vacant by NLUD-PDL. At March 2005 the Register held 713 sites covering just under 3,600 hectares. The Register does not currently distinguish between brownfield and greenfield sites.

Public Toilets

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authority maintained public toilets there were in each London borough in each of the last five years. [2478]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is only held by each individual local authority and there is no national central repository detailing up-to-date data of this kind. Up until 2001 the Audit Commission carried out comprehensive surveys, looking at public toilet numbers, but the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister understands that this has now ceased.

Supporting People Programme

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many units of housing support have been provided in each year of the supporting people programme; and how many units are projected to be provided for subsequent years. [2438]

Mr. Woolas: In 2003–04 there were a total of 1,232,889 household units; information for 2004–05 is not currently available. However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister now gathers data from administering authorities through the supporting people local systems, every quarter. This exercise will provide details of the number of household units for 2004–05 onwards.

Administering authorities are responsible for commissioning local services; therefore, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is unable to project future service levels.

TREASURY

Alcohol-related Deaths (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many alcohol-related deaths there were in each London borough in each year since 1997. [2502]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Sarah Teather, dated 9 June 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many alcohol-related deaths there were in each London borough in each year since 1997. (2502)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2004. The table below shows the numbers of deaths among residents of London boroughs where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 1997 to 2004.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] to usual residents of London boroughs, registered 1997 to 2004

London borough	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
City of London	—	—	1	1	—	1	2	—
Barking and Dagenham	12	16	23	14	18	19	17	15
Barnet	19	18	17	22	29	23	32	18

Alcohol-related deaths[1] to usual residents of London boroughs, registered 1997 to 2004

London borough	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Bexley	16	22	20	26	25	27	27	16
Brent	33	40	40	32	30	40	25	33
Bromley	21	24	24	30	27	26	21	30
Camden	40	37	41	28	44	35	27	27
Croydon	32	30	43	34	33	28	43	23
Ealing	33	28	34	31	37	38	44	39
Enfield	17	19	25	22	13	21	28	26
Greenwich	20	29	31	32	29	25	25	26
Hackney	13	21	27	16	19	21	25	29
Hammersmith and Fulham	20	30	23	25	26	24	25	35
Haringey	27	13	23	23	21	20	19	25
Harrow	23	20	20	13	14	17	16	22
Havering	17	13	14	9	14	24	19	18
Hillingdon	34	25	23	16	26	27	30	43
Hounslow	18	38	29	31	29	32	46	28
Islington	25	36	22	25	32	26	22	13
Kensington and Chelsea	16	16	20	28	16	21	14	13
Kingston upon Thames	11	18	18	14	24	19	16	13
Lambeth	33	41	35	40	32	28	34	33
Lewisham	32	28	30	24	29	41	32	32
Merton	18	23	18	22	19	22	21	13
Newham	28	19	33	29	28	33	32	36
Redbridge	27	19	24	26	16	24	16	21
Richmond upon Thames	16	17	19	17	15	29	29	23
Southwark	35	28	28	37	40	31	35	28
Sutton	11	10	21	18	10	17	9	12
Tower Hamlets	23	22	27	30	18	25	26	20
Waltham Forest	15	21	12	21	21	18	19	16
Wandsworth	28	29	31	32	41	24	30	21
Westminster	34	38	33	38	34	32	28	25

[1] For the years 1999–2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed as follows:
291—Alcoholic psychoses
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol
For the years 2001–2004 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol
The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in: Baker A and Rooney C (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. Health Statistics Quarterly 17, pp 5–14.

Canal Barges (Red Diesel)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the likely impact of changes in the taxation of red diesel on *(a)* owners and *(b)* users of canal barges. [2765]

John Healey: The Chancellor takes account of all relevant economic, social and environmental factors for all sectors, including barge owners and users, in determining duty rates.

Private boat owners in Britain are permitted to use red diesel under a derogation of the European energy products directive, which is due to expire at the end of 2006. Officials from HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs are discussing this issue with boating associations.

Child Trust Fund Vouchers

Annette Brooke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many parents and carers who received Child Trust Fund vouchers by 30 April have set up relevant savings accounts with them; [2113]

(2) how many parents and carers have been issued with Child Trust Fund vouchers; and what the total value is of the vouchers issued up to 30 April. [2114]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: On the number of vouchers issued and accounts opened, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 286–87W.

The total value of vouchers issued up to 30 April 2005 was about £452 million.

Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which consultants have been employed by his Department in each of the last three years. [892]

John Healey: A list of the individuals and firms hired on a consultancy basis by the Treasury in 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 has been placed in the Library of the House.

G8 Summit

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate his Department has made of the costs of policing the G8 summit in Perthshire; [2336]

(2) what estimate his Department has made of the additional costs to policing of the G8 summit across Scotland. [2337]

Mr. Des Browne: Policing arrangements for the G8 summit are a devolved responsibility of the Scottish Executive and its police authorities.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the costs will be to his Department of policing the G8 summit. [2338]

Mr. Des Browne: The Government have agreed to provide £20 million towards the policing costs of the G8 summit.

Home Ownership

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the basis is of the Government's target of creating 1 million more homeowners by 2010. [2456]

John Healey: The Government expect 1 million people to enter home-ownership over the next five years as a result of the strong and stable macro-economic conditions that it has created and sustained with interest rates close to historically low levels; unemployment close a record low; employment rising in every region; and uninterrupted economic growth.

This growth in homeownership will be supported by the measures set out in the Deputy Prime Minister's five-year plan "Homes for All" which will assist up to 110,000 households to become first-time buyers.

Income Tax

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07 of removing from income tax liability the first £10,000 of income; and how many people he estimates this would remove from income tax liability. [2840]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The information is provided in the following table.

	Cost of removing from income tax liability the first £10,000 of income (£ billion)	*Number of people removed from income tax liability (Thousand)*
2005–06	29,8	7,010
2006–07	29,6	6,640

These estimates have been obtained after increasing all personal allowances (i.e. the personal allowances and personal allowances for individuals aged 65 and above) to £10,000.

There would be no savings from lower tax credits since tax credit entitlement is based on gross income.

The personal allowance is currently linked to the Primary and Secondary Class 1 National Insurance contributions thresholds and the Class 4 Lower Profits Limit. No cost has been included to increase these thresholds in line with the personal allowance.

The income tax information is based upon the 2002–03 Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI) projected forward.

The figures exclude any estimate of behavioural response to the tax change, which could be significant given the scale of the changes.

MG Rover

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what guidance has been given to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs in respect of deferment of VAT payments by companies suffering losses as a result of MG Rover going into administration; what guidelines are in operation on this; and if he will make a statement. [2741]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) continue to treat businesses affected by the administration of MG Rover as sensitively as they usually do in such circumstances. Their approach to revenue debt is not only to secure the revenue but to provide flexible assistance to help viable businesses survive short term financial problems and restructuring. Within the legislation governing VAT and PAYE, deferred payment arrangements are made available on a case-by-case basis within HMRC's usual remit. Guidance has been published on HMRC's internet site about debt management issues, with particular reference to the administration of MG Rover.

Public Procurement Directive

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether Article 45 of the new EU Public Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC applies only to EU companies tendering for public procurement projects in the EU; [2384]

(2) what steps the Office of Government Commerce has taken to establish information-sharing mechanisms with *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* Government Departments in (i) the UK and (ii) the EU on convictions held by UK companies for corruption, fraud, money laundering and criminal investigation; [2386]

(3) what steps the Office of Government Commerce has taken to establish an agreed contact point for advice on blacklisting companies in public procurement for *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* Government departments and *(c)* companies; [2392]

(4) if he will place a copy of the record of discussions held between the Office of Government Commerce and the Home Office's Criminal Investigation Bureau about implementation of Article 45 of the new EU Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC in the Library; [2393]

(5) what steps the Office of Government Commerce has taken to establish a national list of compulsorily disqualified contractors in relation to the EU Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC; [2394]

(6) what sanctions will be applicable under the EU Public Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC to those companies that fail to alert contracting authorities to convictions held for corruption, fraud, money laundering and criminal organisations. [2591]

John Healey: Article 45 of the new ED public procurement Directive (2004/18/EC) will apply to the award of all public contracts for goods, works and services which are covered by that Directive. The Directive requires that candidates or tenderers shall normally be excluded where the contracting authorities are aware of relevant convictions, and that the contracting authorities may apply to a so-called competent authority in each member state to obtain further information about the convictions of the companies concerned. The Office of Government Commerce is currently considering, with the Criminal Records Bureau, how this need for information on convictions, via a competent authority, can best be implemented in the UK. This will then be reflected in guidance on Article 45, which will be published before the implementation of the new Directive. Companies which fail to notify contracting authorities about their relevant convictions, in response to questions from such authorities, should be considered for exclusion from future contracts and for breach of any terms and conditions for contracts awarded under the new Directive.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many meetings the Office of Government Commerce has had with UK companies and businesses to discuss Article 45 of the new EU Public Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC since August 2004; and if he will list the companies with which he has had such meetings; [2385]

(2) on what date the Office of Government Commerce intends to publish its regulations and guidance on the new EU Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC for public consultation; [2388]

(3) if he will place a copy of all the responses to the Office of Government Commerce consultation on the new EU Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC in the Library; and how many consultees requested confidentiality for their responses. [2391]

John Healey: The Office of Government Commerce (OGC) has engaged with both the public and private sectors on the implementation of the new EU public procurement Directive, by means of the consultation exercise undertaken in 2004. This consultation included Article 45, which concerns the mandatory exclusion from public contracts of suppliers convicted of certain offences. A summary of the 255 replies to the consultation exercise, from Government Departments, local authorities, law firms, suppliers, trade unions and other interested parties, together with OGC's response to the issues raised, has already been published on the OGC website: http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1002381. The OGC will begin the second stage of consultation, on the draft Regulations to implement the new Directive, shortly. The draft Regulations take account of the responses to the earlier consultation exercise. OGC intends to publish additional guidance on specific provisions, including on Article 45, before the implementation of the new Directive. The deadline for which in all member states is 31 January 2006.

Tax (Underpayments)

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was collected as a result of Inland Revenue initiatives to collect underpayments of tax of less than £100 in each of the last five years; and what the cost to the Inland Revenue of collecting underpayments of tax of less than £100 was in each year. [2855]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC have not undertaken any special initiatives to collect amounts underpaid of less than £100. Underpayments identified within Pay As You Earn (PAYE) of less than £2,000 are, where possible, collected by a restriction to the customers PAYE code for the subsequent tax year.

HMRC do not keep specific data relating to the cost of collecting PAYE underpayments.

Unemployment (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* long-term and *(b)* young unemployed people there were in (i) Brent East and (ii) each London borough in each year since 1997. [2535]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Sarah Teather, dated 9 June 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment in Brent East and each London borough. (2535)

Table 1, attached below, shows the numbers of long-term unemployed (over 12 months) and unemployed persons aged 16 to 24 in Brent East for each 12-month period ending in February each year from 1998 to 2004, the latest period for which data are available. This is based on annual local area Labour Force Survey data which as with any statistical sample survey is subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas. Table 2, attached below, shows the annual average number of JSA claimants claiming for over 12 months and the number of claimants aged 18-24 resident in Brent East for each year from 1997 to 2004.

The data in table 2 are available free of charge from the Nomis website (www.nomisweb.co.uk) which can be accessed via the House of Commons Library.

The information requested for each London Borough was given in an answer to a previous question (ref 212371) on 7 March 2005 (Hansard column 1517W).

Table 1: Unemployed resident in Brent East constituency

Thousand

12 months ending February	*Youth (aged 16–24)*	*Over 12 months*
1998	[1]—	n/a
1999	[1]—	[1]—
2000	[1]—	[1]—
2001	2	2
2002	1	[1]—
2003	2	1
2004	1	1

n/a = data not available

[1] Zero or disclosive sample size.

Source:

Annual local area Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Brent East constituency

Annual averages	*Youth claimants (aged 18–24)*[1]	*All claimants for over 12 months*[1]
1997	965	2,070
1998	775	1,415
1999	615	1,075
2000	495	865
2001	460	670
2002	600	750
2003	620	910
2004	650	985

[1] Computerised claims only.

Source:

Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

VAT (Charities)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the revenue from VAT received from UK charities in the most recent year for which figures are available. [2874]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HM Revenue and Customs do not collect data on VAT from individual goods and services. The amount of VAT received from UK charities is therefore unavailable.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Absence (Secondary Schools)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps is the Government taking to lower the rate of unauthorised absences in secondary schools. [2931]

Jacqui Smith: We are concerned about all forms of absence from school and have made raising attendance our priority. Attendance levels have risen for the last three years and in 2003–04 stood at a record high of 93.4 per cent. We continue to work with parents, schools and local authorities to improve attendance.

We have put in place a range of measures such as extra support for schools and local authorities from expert advisers and through additional resources. In addition, we are promoting effective practice including national truancy sweeps, and practices such as first day contact with parents and e-registration systems. We have also introduced the 'Fast-track Framework' a system to ensure early identification of attendance problems and a time-limited approach to solving them.

Another part of our strategy is to ensure parents play their part in supporting schools by ensuring that their child attends school regularly. The vast majority do so. Where parents are in need of support to fulfil their responsibilities, parenting contracts can provide them with the professional support they need and help them focus on what needs to be done to improve their child's attendance. However, where parents are not unable, but simply unwilling, to fulfil their responsibilities, they face strong measures such as penalty notices, prosecutions and compulsory Parenting Orders.

By September 2007, we expect all secondary schools to be working together in collaborations, with funds devolved from their local authorities, to manage support and provision for persistent truants as well as those that are excluded or at risk of exclusion.

Adult Education Funding

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the funding of adult places at further education institutions is *(a)* discretionary for the individual institutions and *(b)* subject to the requirements of the priority areas agreed between her Department and the Learning and Skills Council. [3242]

Bill Rammell: The Department sets out its national priorities for post-16 learning and skills, including PSA targets, in the annual grant letter to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC is responsible for planning and funding provision which meets national, regional and local needs. Individual colleges and providers agree plans with the LSC which take account of national priorities and local needs and public funding is allocated accordingly. As independent organisations, colleges continue to decide the full breadth of provision they offer for adults.

A-levels

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in England failed one or more A level examinations in each year since 1997. [2906]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on the number of students failing at least one A Level, since 1999 can be found in the following table.

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Candidates	231,257	236,028	236,016	231,351
Number failing at least one A Level	59,085	57,916	55,801	52,844
Percentage failing at least one A Level	25.5	24.5	23.6	22.8

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Candidates	241,013	257,922	268,671	265,257
Number failing at least one A Level	54,577	33,418	32,274	27,598
Percentage failing at least one A Level	22.6	13.0	12.0	10.4

Following the "Qualifying for Success (or Curriculum 2000)" reforms a new advanced subsidiary (AS) and A2 qualification were introduced, representing the first and second halves of a traditional full A level course. These figures relate to the A2 qualifications rather than ASs.

Bullying

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the participation rates of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in her Department's anti-bullying consultations. [2716]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills does not hold figures on the numbers of primary and secondary schools that we involve in our anti-bullying strategies.

However, the Make the Difference conferences which ran between November 2003 and June 2004 and celebrated and shared good practice in preventing and addressing bullying were attended by approximately 5,000 delegates, many of whom were head teachers and teachers. For the Make the Difference conferences the delegate ratio was approximately two secondary head teachers to three primary heads.

Our recent informal consultation on countering racist bullying, and our event on this theme on 24 March, invited headteachers, teachers and LEA officers to contribute their experience of effective practice in preventing and responding to racist bullying to assist with our advice in this area.

Drug Abuse (Secondary Schools)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to tackle drug abuse in English secondary schools; and if she will make a statement. [2115]

Beverley Hughes: The Government are committed to taking robust action to reduce significantly the numbers of young people affected by drugs. "Drugs: Guidance for Schools" (DfES 2004) outlines how schools should have in place procedures for managing drug incidents. Schools play an important part in providing drug education and pastoral support to all pupils and in identifying children and young people vulnerable to drug misuse. Those who require extra help should receive it in school or through a referral to other services. Schools should work closely with their local Drug Action Teams (DATs) to ensure that there is appropriate support in place for young people.

Every Child Matters Programme

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for which programmes under Every Child Matters a reduction in crime rates is a specified objective. [2308]

Beverley Hughes: Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a major programme of reform for children's services. It is based around an outcomes framework against which children's services will be assessed and inspected, which includes the aims that children and young people should engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour, and be safe from crime and antisocial behaviour, both in and out of school. All programmes are expected to contribute to the outcomes framework, and children's services will work in partnership with Youth Offending Teams and other relevant agencies.

Programmes with a specific objective for reducing crime rates include: Positive Activities for Young People, Connexions, Safer Schools Partnerships, On-Track and other Children's Fund programmes and a range of Youth Offending Team programme—particularly Youth Inclusion Programmes, Youth Inclusion and Support Panels and Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes. An extensive programme of work to improve behaviour and attendance in schools will have an indirect impact on reducing youth crime rates.

Exclusions and Bad Behaviour Review

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to involve hon. Members in her review of exclusions and bad behaviour. [2867]

Jacqui Smith: The new Leadership Group on behaviour will be happy to receive representations from hon. Members.

I shall keep hon. Members informed in the usual way about any new policies emerging from the work of the Leadership Group.

Free School Meals (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils received free school meals in each London borough in each year since 1997; and how many pupils she estimates are entitled to claim free school meals. [2495]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

John Kelly Schools (repairs)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the need for building repairs at John Kelly *(a)* girls and *(b)* boys schools; and if she will make a statement. [2552]

Jacqui Smith: The condition assessment data supplied to the Department by Brent in 2003 showed maintenance requirements for John Kelly Girls School and John Kelly Boys Schools amounting to £460,000 and £586,000 respectively, updated to current price levels. In addition to backlog repair work, the figures cover work needed over a five year period from the dates of the assessments, including cyclical and scheduled maintenance.

Central government capital support for investment in schools has increased from under £700 million in 1996–97 to £5.5 billion this year and will rise further to

£6.3 billion by 2007–08. Progress is being made year-by-year in improving the quality of the school building stock.

Leadership Incentive Grant

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of secondary schools in *(a)* Birmingham, *(b)* Dudley, *(c)* Coventry, *(d)* Sandwell, *(e)* Solihull, *(f)* Walsall, *(g)* Wolverhampton, *(h)* Worcestershire, *(i)* Staffordshire, *(j)* Shropshire, *(k)* Telford and Wrekin, *(l)* Warwickshire and *(m)* Stoke-on-Trent receive the Leadership Incentive Grant. [2850]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is as follows:

	Number of maintained mainstream secondary schools			
LEA	*Total*	*LIG*[1]	*Non-LIG*	*Percentage that receive LIG*[1]
Birmingham	76	76	0	100
Dudley	22	5	17	23
Coventry	19	11	8	58
Sandwell	18	18	0	100
Solihull	14	4	9	29
Walsall	20	9	11	45
Wolverhampton	18	18	0	100
Worcestershire	29	3	26	10
Staffordshire	55	9	46	16
Shropshire	22	4	18	18
Telford and Wrekin	14	4	9	29
Warwickshire	37	7	30	19
Stoke-on-Trent	17	17	0	100

[1] Based on schools receiving LIG funding in 2004–05 and including CTCs and Academies.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria are used to decide which schools receive the Leadership Incentive Grant; and whether she plans to change the criteria. [2851]

Jacqui Smith: Those schools eligible for funding through the Leadership Incentive Grant are as follows:

> All mainstream secondary schools in recognised priority areas of disadvantage—Excellence in Cities Areas, Excellence Clusters and Education Action Zones—(around 1,100 schools); and
>
> Other mainstream secondary schools with more than 35 per cent. of pupils eligible for free school meals; and
>
> Other mainstream secondary schools where fewer than 30 per cent. of pupils attained five GCSEs at grades A*-C in 2001 or 2002.

There are no plans to change the criteria in the final year of Leadership Incentive Grant funding.

Looked-after Children

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of children subject to *(a)* fixed-term and *(b)* permanent exclusions in the last five years were looked-after children. [2316]

Jacqui Smith: The Department collects information on children who have been looked after for at least 12 months and have been permanently excluded from schools. The available information is given in the table.

Number of children looked after at 30 September 2000 to 2004 who had been looked after for at least 12 months and have been permanently excluded from school—England

	Looked-after children				
	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Number of children looked after at 30 September who had been looked after for at least 12 months	42,200	43,400	44,100	44,900	45,000
of these:					
Number eligible for full-time schooling	33,100	33,800	34,500	35,100	35,300
Number of looked after children permanently excluded from school[1]	490	450	420	380	320
Percentage of all looked after pupils eligible for full-time schooling[2]	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.1	0.9
Total number of permanent exclusions[3]	8,320	9,140	9,540	9,290	n/a
Percentage of all permanent exclusions[4]	5.9	4.9	4.4	4.1	n/a

n/a—not available

[1] If a child was permanently excluded more than once in the previous school year, each occasion has been counted.

[2] The number of looked-after children who have been excluded from school expressed as a percentage of all looked-after children eligible for full-time schooling.

[3] Total number of permanent exclusions from maintained primary, secondary and all special schools. Figures are given for the previous school year.

[4] The number of looked-after children who have been excluded from school expressed as a percentage of all permanent exclusions.

Sources:

OC2 and Annual Schools Census

The Department has recently started to collect information on fixed period exclusions via the Termly Exclusions Survey. First findings from this survey for the 2003/04 academic year will be published in a Statistical First Release on 23 June 2005. However, quality checks are still ongoing to establish whether an analysis of fixed period exclusions by looked-after status will be sufficiently robust and fit for publication.

NVQ (School Catering)

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to make the vocational qualification in school catering a national vocational qualification. [2796]

Jacqui Smith: We have no current plans to do so. The Food Standards Agency and the Department commissioned People 1st (the Sector Skills Council for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism industries) to develop a vocational qualification in school catering following a study on secondary school meals. The study recommended that a basic qualification should be developed which included the basics of nutrition and which would give school cooks the knowledge and skills to deliver a healthier school meals service. People 1st consulted a number of organisations in order to produce a Training Needs Assessment report before developing the qualification. It was clear from their research that the training had to be suitable for the part-time nature of the school catering work force.

We are currently working with People 1st, the Food Standards Agency, the Teacher Training Agency, the LSC and the QCA to review and build on the qualifications that are currently available (including full NVQs) to ensure we have a ladder of qualifications, which includes information on nutritional standards where appropriate, and will meet the skills needs of all catering staff.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what role the British Nutrition Foundation has in *(a)* developing the content of food and nutrition courses in schools and *(b)* developing the course content of the vocational qualification in school catering. [2798]

Jacqui Smith: The British Nutrition Foundation contributes to national consultations on the national curriculum. The foundation's main areas of interest and expertise relate to food and nutrition ie science, design and technology, home economics and PSHE. Their responses are published on their website www.nutrition.org.uk The foundation offered advice to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) on suitable content for potential A-level food technology specifications several years ago, prior to the development of these new courses. More recently, they have undertaken a research project for the QCA on the extent to which current GCSE examinations help to deliver the Food Standards Agency's "Getting to Grips with Grub" competences for 14 to 16-year-olds. This report was delivered to my Department and QCA in May 2005.

The British Nutrition Foundation has not been directly involved with the development of the vocational qualification which has been developed by People 1st (the Sector Skills Council for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism industries) in consultation with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and my Department. People 1st consulted with the Caroline Walker Trust, the Local Authority Catering Association and a number of local authorities as part of their initial research into identifying the key issues involved in the delivery of nutrition training to school meals staff. The foundation worked closely with the FSA on the development of the publication "Catering for Health" (2001), which they took forward on behalf of the FSA and Department of Health as a basis for encouraging healthier catering practices.

Out-of-Classroom Education

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to take forward the out of classroom education manifesto; and if she will make a statement. [2682]

Jacqui Smith: We held an initial scoping workshop in February with around 30 stakeholder organisations from outdoor and adventurous activities, field studies, school grounds, farming and countryside, museums and galleries, built environment, cultural and heritage, organisations where they contributed their ideas about the scope and purpose of a manifesto. We will develop this further in consultation with the very many organisations with an interest in out of classroom learning and off-site visits.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will make it her policy to ensure that every school child has the opportunity to experience out-of-classroom learning in the natural environment; [2023]

(2) if she will issue guidance in out-of-classroom education as part of the National Curriculum; [2024]

(3) if she will commission research into the merits of out-of-classroom education. [2025]

Jacqui Smith: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on 15 February that we will be working with partners to develop an 'Education Outside the Classroom' Manifesto. The majority of schools already offer a range of out of classroom learning that enriches the curriculum, builds confidence and increases skills. The Manifesto will set out a joint commitment that all children should have the opportunity of a wide range of high quality out of classroom learning, including at least one residential experience. It will also seek to encourage schools to partner with other schools and out of classroom learning providers and to encourage parents to take an active interest out of classroom learning. It will set out a range of advice and support, provide information and good practice guidance on health and safety issues and set out priorities for the development of out of classroom learning. We part funded the National Foundation for Educational Research to review outdoor learning research. The report was published last year and showed the benefits of out-of-classroom education. We do not intend to commission further research for this purpose.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will discuss with the Teacher Training Agency incorporating into *(a)* initial teacher training courses and *(b)* continuing professional development programmes training on education outside the classroom. [2026]

Jacqui Smith: The Education Act 2005 provides a new and wider remit for the Teacher Training Agency. From September, as the Training and Development Agency for Schools, it will assume responsibility for the training and development not only of the whole school workforce, but also of teachers who work outside the classroom. The Agency is currently planning how to discharge these new responsibilities and the Secretary of State will receive its advice on this in due course.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the risk assessment system for school trips. [2027]

Jacqui Smith: The Education and Skills Select Committee Inquiry into Education Outside the Classroom found that mishaps on educational visits are rare, with serious problems very unlikely to occur. We believe that this excellent record is the result of good risk management by local education authorities, schools and their staff. Risk management is a statutory requirement that covers staff and pupils on educational premises and offsite on educational visits. "Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits" (DfES 2002) sets out the principles of risk assessment, emphasising that schools must strike the right balance, being neither overcautious nor careless.

We are preparing with our partners a Manifesto for Education Outside the Classroom which will reinforce our advice that local education authorities and schools should complete risk assessments that are proportionate to the level of risk of a particular activity.

Parenting Fund

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes she has made to the criteria for obtaining a grant from the Parenting Fund. [2750]

Beverley Hughes: The Government have made no changes to the criteria for obtaining a grant from the Parenting Fund. The fund, worth £25 million over 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06, is currently managed by the National Family and Parenting Institute. The Parenting Fund will benefit from an extra £10 million in 2006–07 and £10 million in 2007–08.

Physical Education (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what average number of hours per week of physical education was undertaken in schools in *(a)* Brent, East and *(b)* each London borough in the last 12 months. [2516]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the 2004–05 PE, School Sport and Club Links survey, which is currently under way, will provide data relating to the percentage of pupils in school sport partnership schools who spend at least two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport. This data will be broken down by LEA area. The results of the survey will be published in the autumn and a copy will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Private Finance Projects

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the Private Finance Initiative and Public Private Partnership projects her Department is undertaking; and what the status of each is. [2364]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills does not itself undertake Private Finance Initiative (PFI) projects. PFI projects for the provision of schools are delivered through contracts between local authorities and private sector contractors. There are currently 89 such projects with signed contracts, of which 50 have operational status. Further details can be accessed at www.teachernet.gov.uk/pfi.

The Department is itself undertaking one Public Private Partnership (PPP) project in partnership with Capita. This project has operational status and is for the delivery of the Connexions card across England. It is scheduled to continue until December 2008.

Pupil Exclusions

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on her policy on exclusions in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools. [1617]

Jacqui Smith: Real progress has been made since 1997 in tackling poor behaviour in schools. Permanent exclusions are 25 per cent. lower than in 1997 and Ofsted indicate that pupil behaviour is good in most schools. We have made record investments in behaviour support for schools.

We have made it clear that we will not tolerate disruptive behaviour in the classroom and we are committed to backing head teachers' authority where pupils' behaviour warrants exclusion.

We expect all secondary schools to be working together in collaborations by September 2007, with funds devolved from their local authorities, to manage support and provision for pupils at risk of exclusion, persistent truants and excluded pupils. Evidence from schools already working together in this way shows that they are effective in improving behaviour and reducing the need for exclusion.

Pupil Spending

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department spent per pupil in *(a)* primary, *(b)* secondary and *(c)* further education in (i) Brent East and (ii) each local education authority in England in each year since 1997. [2545]

Jacqui Smith: The available information concerning primary and secondary education has been placed in the Library of the House. The Department does not collect information on the level of funding per student in further education at a local or regional level.

Salary Sacrificing Schemes

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to enable teachers to participate in salary sacrificing schemes to secure tax relief on child care vouchers; and if she will make a statement. [2633]

Jacqui Smith: School teachers in England and Wales are not eligible to participate in salary sacrifice schemes. The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, which is the statutory framework governing teachers' pay, makes no provision for permitting a reduction in salary in any circumstances. However, any teachers may be paid recruitment and retention incentives and benefits of any value or nature in addition to their salary.

School Administration

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to reduce the burden of administration in schools. [2956]

Jacqui Smith: The Government are determined that schools should undertake only essential administration and that this should be done by the most appropriate staff in the most efficient and effective ways. In particular, we are freeing up teachers' time so that they can concentrate on teaching.

We are developing a new relationship with schools that will halve the time and effort of inspection while focusing it even more closely on improving teaching and learning. We are working in my Department and with external parties which want data from schools to ensure that only essential data is collected, that it is then by sample wherever possible, and that data is collected once only and used many times.

We intend to focus a wide range of work concerned with raising standards through a "single conversation" with a dedicated school improvement partner for every school, leading as far as possible to a single school plan. We are consulting on future funding arrangements for schools that will increase local flexibility and simplify accounting.

We have replaced direct mailings to schools with free on-line ordering, prompted by regular emails setting out what is available. This means schools get only the publications they want, and in just the quantities they need.

Our efficiency targets will increase productive time in schools and will be achieved to a large extent through the effective use of a variety of information and communications technologies (ICT). That is why we continue to invest substantially in ICT in schools and encourage the new and more effective ways of working that ICT enables.

Through the national agreement on raising standards and tackling workload we have made contractual changes that from September will give every teacher 10 per cent. timetabled time for planning, preparation and assessment. Earlier provisions of the agreement mean teachers' obligations to cover for absent colleagues are already greatly reduced and support staff have taken over from teachers a wide range of essential administrative tasks.

Crucially, we have set up the implementation review unit comprising heads and other school leaders currently working in successful schools. This is the first ever body with a remit to challenge the Department on every aspect of school policy. Their role is to hold my Department and its agencies accountable for ensuring that policies are practicable and have maximum impact on the achievements and well being of our children through simple and efficient delivery in the frontline.

School Funding

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the revenue funding per *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school pupil from her Department to each English local education authority was in 2004–05, broken down by (i) basic amount, (ii) deprivation factor, (iii) funding to reflect higher recruitment and retention costs, (iv) rurality factor and (v) other amounts. [1015]

Jacqui Smith: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to him on 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 608W.

Tables showing the breakdown for 2005–06 are now available on the Department's school funding website http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding/. accessible within the index under the title 'Education Funding Model 2005–06 (final settlement) 27 Jan 2005'.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the per capita pupil funding in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in (i) Cheshire and (ii) England (A) is in 2005–06 and (B) has been in each of the last eight years; what assessment she has made of the differences between the figures; and if she will make a statement; [1753]

(2) if she will take steps to reduce the difference between the national average per capita pupil funding in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools and that in Cheshire. [1754]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows the per pupil figures for the years in question apart from the 2005–06 financial year for which we do not yet have final figures. Total funding includes funding via education formula spending/standard spending assessment and grants allocated at an LEA level. It excludes the pensions transfer to EFS and the Learning and Skills Council, and is in real terms. It should be noted that the information also relates to education funding provision for children aged 3–10 and 11–15 rather than that which is allocated to an authority's primary and secondary schools through its school funding formula.

The funding that local authorities receive for schools reflects their relative need compared with other authorities. LEAs have a good deal of freedom to decide how to allocate the available resources for education through their funding formulae and under the Financing of Maintained Schools Regulations, it is for each LEA to decide for itself what balance to strike between the relative funding of primary and secondary schools, after consulting its schools and its Schools Forum.

	LEA total	England total
Aged 3–10		
1997–98	2,180	2,390
1998–99	2,250	2,470
1999–2000	2,400	2,630
2000–01	2,610	2,860
2001–02	2,750	3,030
2002–03	2,790	3,100
2003–04	2,970	3,290
2004–05	3,070	3,420
Change	890	1,030
Aged 11–15		
1997–98	2,990	3,260
1998–99	3,040	3,330
1999–00	3,130	3,450
2000–01	3,370	3,740
2001–02	3,500	3,940
2002–03	3,560	4,010
2003–04	3,640	4,080
2004–05	3,840	4,280
Change	850	1,020

Notes:

1. Price Base: Real terms at 2003–04 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 23 March 2005.

2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education SSA/EFS settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EFS and LSC.

3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES departmental expenditure limits relevant to pupils aged 3–10 and 11–15 and exclude grants not allocated at LEA level.

4. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to per pupil are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC 3-year-old maintained pupils and estimated 3 to 4-year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.

5. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £10.

6. Status: 2003–04 and 2004–05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

7. 1997–98 figures for Cheshire, which was subject to local government reorganisation in that year, have been estimated, pro-rata to their post LGR figures.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent per student in secondary schools in England in each year since 1997. [2953]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is contained within the following table:

Secondary school based expenditure[1] per pupil[2]

	£
1997–98	2,360
1998–99	2,450
1999–2000[3,5]	2,610
2000–01	2,830
2001–02	3,150
2002–03[3,4]	3,230
2003–04[4]	3,550

[1] School based expenditure includes only expenditure incurred directly by the schools. This includes the pay of teachers and school-based support staff, school premises costs, books and equipment, and certain other supplies and services, less any capital items funded from recurrent spending and income from sales, fees and charges and rents and rates. This excludes the central cost of support services such as home to school transport, local authority administration and the financing of capital expenditure.

[2] Pupil numbers include only those pupils attending LEA maintained secondary schools and are drawn from the DfES Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

[3] 1999–2000 saw a change in data source when the data collection moved from the RO1 form collected by the ODPM to the Section 52 form from the DfES. 2002–03 saw a further break in the time series following the introduction of Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) and the associated restructuring of the outturn tables. The change in sources is shown by the dotted lines.

[4] The 2002–03 and 2003–04 calculation is broadly similar to the calculation in previous years. However, 2001–02 and earlier years includes all premature retirement compensation (PRC) and Crombie payments, mandatory PRC payments and other indirect employee expenses, while in 2002–03 and 2003–04 only the schools element of these categories is included. In 2001–02 this accounted for approximately 70 per pupil of the England total, while the schools element of these categories accounted for approximately 50 per pupil of the England total in 2002–03. Also, for some LEAs, expenditure that had previously been attributed to the school sectors was reported within the LEA part of the form in 2002–03 and 2003–04 and would therefore be excluded, though this is not quantifiable from existing sources.

[5] The 1999–2000 figures reflect the return of grant maintained schools to local authority maintenance.

Note:

Figures are reported in cash terms and rounded to the nearest 10 as reported by the LEA.

School Management Information Systems

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will publish the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency document, Value for Money Review of School Management Information Systems; and if she will place a copy in the Library. [2648]

Jacqui Smith: Becta (the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) is currently finalising its review of school management information systems and value for money. Becta will submit its recommendations to Ministers in the next few weeks. Once Ministers have considered Becta's advice and decided how to proceed, Becta will publish its findings more widely. A copy of the published report will be placed in the Library.

School Meals

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much Government funding is being allocated to improve school meals; when this funding will become available; how it will be apportioned; what assessment has been made of current contractual arrangements entered into between local education authorities and suppliers of school meals; and if she will make a statement. [1523]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 6 June 2005]:* On 30 March, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced that schools would receive additional funding to help them transform the quality of school meals. Over the three years 2005–07 to 2007–08, all maintained schools in England will receive a share of the £220 million set aside to help local education authorities and schools strengthen their support for healthy eating and to provide better quality food. Of this, £30 million each year will go to schools to help meet transitional costs involved in developing and improving their "whole school" approach to food. £30/50/50 million will go to LEAs to enable them to support schools with this process, with an emphasis on schools in deprived areas and schools starting from a low base. The first call on this money will be helping to deliver the Government's pledge to ensure that schools provide meals with ingredients costing 50p or more in primary schools, and 60p or more in secondary schools.

The first instalment of this additional funding will be available to schools and LEAs this autumn. Further details about the distribution of both grants will be announced in due course.

We are currently considering how best to capture information about school meals provision, including information about patterns of school meals provision in different local education authorities.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress she has made in ensuring that all schools adopt a whole-school approach to their food in school policies. [2751]

Jacqui Smith: From later this year, the 'Healthy Schools' programme will include healthy eating as a compulsory element, which schools will need to address to reach the National Healthy Schools' standard. We are aiming for all schools to be working towards 'Healthy School' status by 2009.

Existing guidance and resources support all aspects of food education within the national curriculum as well as a range of extra-curricular activities aimed at developing healthy eating habits. The guidance encourages schools to adopt a consistent approach to teaching about diet, nutrition, cooking, food hygiene and safety, and to reflect this approach in the provision of food that pupils eat at school.

The School Food Trust will play a key role in taking forward the Government's programme for improving school food. It will give independent support and advice to schools and parents to improve the standard of school meals and to ensure that the issue of school food remains high on the agenda.

In the next three years, beginning September 2005, £220 million of new grants will be given directly to schools and local education authorities to raise the quality of school meals. We want schools to use those direct grants to develop a coherent 'whole school' approach to food, covering all other aspects of food provision in school as well as using the curriculum to reinforce healthy eating principles. The money could also be used to fund training and/or longer working hours for school cooks.

School Repairs

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on repairing schools in Coventry in each year since 1997. [537]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 25 May 2005]:* Revenue expenditure figures on the maintenance and improvement of schools are likely to vary from year to year depending on the unique circumstances of a particular LEA. For example, revenue expenditure will increase in years where there have been adverse weather conditions (e.g. repairing storm damage) and is also likely to vary with the number and age of the school buildings within the LEA. Revenue expenditure will also be affected by the amounts of capital expenditure employed at a school. Capital spending in Coventry LEA on school buildings has increased from £6.96 million in 1997–98 to £13.57 million in 2003–04. Figures are rounded to the nearest £1,000.

The information concerning public funding spent on repairing schools in Coventry is contained within the following table:

Maintenance and improvement of school buildings and grounds in Coventry LEA since 1997

	£
1997–98[1,2]	4,105,000
1998–99[1,2]	4,057,000
1999–2000[1,2]	2,783,000
2000–01[1,2]	3,346,000
2001–02[1,2]	4,573,000
2002–03[1,2]	3,374,000
2003–04[1,2]	3,238,000

[1] Figures for 1997–98 to 2001–02 cover the repair and maintenance of buildings, fixed plant and grounds which includes all expenditure on non-capital building works, including repairs and maintenance of buildings, and non-capital expenditure on fixed plant and grounds. Figures for 2002–03 and 2003–04 are the combination of the revenue expenditure on building (including fixed plant) maintenance and improvement and grounds maintenance and improvement (CFR categories E12 + E13). Any capital expenditure on school buildings is not included in this table.

[2] Figures for 2002–03 onwards will not be directly comparable with the figures for earlier years as figures for 1997–98 to 2001–02 are for all LEA maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools (pre-primary expenditure accounts for £18,000, £46,000 and £9,000 of the respective totals in 1999–2000, 2000–01 and 2001–02) while nursery figures for 2002–03 and 2003–04 are not available and have therefore been excluded for these two years. Also, for some LEAs, expenditure that had previously been attributed to the school sectors was reported within the LEA part of the form in 2002–03 and 2003–04 and would therefore be excluded from the totals for those years although the precise amount of this is not quantifiable from existing sources.

Note:

The empty rows denote the change of source from LEAs' education Revenue Outturn Statements submitted to the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions to Section 52 Outturn Statements in 1999–2000, and to the review of the Section 52 categories in 2002–03 following the introduction of Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) to schools.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the requirement for school building repairs in Brent; and if she will make a statement. [2471]

Jacqui Smith: The condition assessment data supplied to the Department by Brent in 2003 showed maintenance requirements amounting to £39.1 million, updated to current price levels. In addition to backlog repair work, the figure covers work needed over a five year period from the dates of the assessments, including cyclical and scheduled maintenance.

Central Government capital support for investment in schools has increased from under £700 million in 1996–97 to £5.5 billion this year and will rise further to £6.3 billion by 2007–08. Progress is being made year-by-year in improving the quality of the school building stock.

Schools (Hammersmith and Fulham)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children are attending schools in Hammersmith and Fulham in the 2004/05 academic year, broken down by postcode district. [2095]

Jacqui Smith: The information has been broken down by local education authority instead of postcode district to comply with the National Statistics code of practice and associated protocols. Every effort has been made to ensure the data does not allow the identification of individual pupils. Any low counts have been suppressed and therefore the sum of LEAs may not equal relevant totals.

	Hammersmith and Fulham LEA
Number of school population resident in Hammersmith and Fulham	9,430
Percentage of school population resident in Hammersmith and Fulham	70.7
Number of school population not resident in Hammersmith and Fulham	3,903
Percentage of school population not resident in Hammersmith and Fulham	29.3

Number of pupils attending schools in Hammersmith and Fulham by LEA of residency

LEA no.	*LEA name*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Special*	*Total*
202	Camden	[1]—	62	[1]—	65
203	Greenwich	[1]—	[1]—	—	6
204	Hackney	5	14	—	19
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	6,505	2,786	139	9430
206	Islington	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	44
207	Kensington and Chelsea	120	745	30	895
208	Lambeth	9	97	9	115
209	Lewisham	[1]—	[1]—	—	22
210	Southwark	[1]—	40	[1]—	43
211	Tower Hamlets	[1]—	[1]—	—	19
212	Wandsworth	30	477	9	516
213	City of Westminster	6	250	14	270
301	Barking and Dagenham	[1]—	[1]—	—	[1]—
302	Barnet	[1]—	[1]—	—	16
304	Brent	146	249	7	402
305	Bromley	—	34	—	34
306	Croydon	[1]—	28	[1]—	32
307	Ealing	240	296	11	547
308	Enfield	—	6	—	6
309	Haringey	[1]—	[1]—	—	27
310	Harrow	7	59	—	66
311	Havering	—	[1]—	—	[1]—
312	Hillingdon	[1]—	51	[1]—	65
313	Hounslow	[1]—	116	[1]—	211
314	Kingston upon Thames	[1]—	41	[1]—	48
315	Merton	4	99	3	106
316	Newham	—	14	—	14
318	Richmond upon Thames	12	118	5	135
319	Sutton	6	19	—	25
320	Waltham Forest	—	6	—	6
821	Luton	[1]—	[1]—	—	[1]—
919	Hertfordshire	—	3	—	3
935	Surrey	—	[1]—	—	[1]—
936	West Sussex	[1]—	[1]—	—	19
	Resident LEA Unknown	63	51	6	120
Total		7,282	5,810	241	13,333

Note:

Includes pupils aged 5 to 15 years

'[1] —' denotes Suppressed values

Source:

PLASC 2005 provisional

Specialised Diplomas

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what employment areas will be covered by the specialised diplomas for young people; and when she expects diplomas in each employment area will be available throughout England. [3050]

Jacqui Smith: I have asked the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to provide by 8 July advice on the delineation of lines for specialised diplomas, which should cover all the main occupational sectors of the economy. I am committed to making rapid progress and, as set out in the White Paper "14–19 Education and Skills", I expect to have the first four lines available nationwide by 2008 and all the lines available nationally by 2015. My officials will be working with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to set the earliest possible timetable for full implementation which does not compromise the stability of the delivery system or place an unmanageable burden on institutions.

Student Grants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what information her Department has distributed to secondary school pupils on the restoration of student grants. [2868]

Bill Rammell: A key part of our communications campaign has been to get information into schools (including secondary schools) and sixth form colleges either directly or via student advisers and key influencers, who our research tells us are the prime sources of information for students and their parents.

This has been undertaken via a number of different channels. For instance, we have provided advisers packs—including a CD ROM, briefing notes and other material—to every school or college student advisor, as well as sending customised information to all UCAS co-ordinators.

We aim to continue with this approach.

Teaching Numbers (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* full-time teachers, *(b)* part-time teachers and *(c)* teaching assistants there were in (i) each London borough and (ii) Brent East in each year since 1997. [2470]

Jacqui Smith: The following tables provide the information requested for January of each year from 1997 to 2004, the latest information available at LEA and constituency level.

Full-time teachers

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
City of London	20	20	10	10	20	10	20	10
Camden	1,350	1,320	1,280	1,190	1,240	1,400	1,300	1,260
Greenwich	1,820	1,760	1,790	1,810	1,820	1,870	1,900	1,950
Hackney	1,350	1,370	1,380	1,400	1,370	1,350	1,470	1,400
Hammersmith and Fulham	870	850	850	890	910	930	970	1,020
Islington	1,270	1,240	1,210	1,220	1,180	1,310	1,250	1,310
Kensington and Chelsea	600	580	600	580	600	610	640	620
Lambeth	1,500	1,490	1,440	1,400	1,420	1,510	1,470	1,510
Lewisham	1,640	1,640	1,590	1,640	1,730	1,800	1,780	1,740
Southwark	1.600	1,670	1,680	1,710	1,810	1,900	1.940	1,900
Tower Hamlets	2,090	2,000	2,090	1,990	1,980	2,010	2,070	2,060
Wandsworth	1,490	1,490	1,510	1,500	1,530	1,570	1,550	1,570
Westminster	1,030	1,050	1,060	1,090	1,140	1,160	1,160	1,160
Barking and Dagenham	1,380	1,350	1,390	1,400	1,420	1,460	1,510	1,610
Barnet	2,440	2,420	2,390	2,360	2,360	2,480	2,490	2,450
Bexley	1,740	1,750	1,790	1,790	1,870	1,980	1,920	1,940
Brent	2,030	2,030	2,000	1,960	1,940	2,000	2,170	2,190
Bromley	2,070	2,100	2,120	2,150	2,270	2,350	2,290	2,320
Croydon	2,310	2,320	2,310	2,470	2,460	2,530	2,640	2,610
Ealing	2,060	2,010	2,070	2,080	2,050	2,130	2,060	2,120
Enfield	2,320	2,400	2,430	2,430	2,480	2,430	2,540	2,590
Haringey	1,720	1,700	1,720	1,720	1,730	1,740	1,750	1,740
Harrow	1,420	1,350	1,330	1,190	1,310	1,310	1,340	1,350
Havering	1,720	1,700	1,730	1,720	1,760	1,840	1,870	1,870
Hillingdon	1,850	1,870	1,880	1,980	2,010	2,060	2,060	2,160
Hounslow	1,850	1,780	1,810	1,780	1,860	1,830	1,840	1,940
Kingston upon Thames	940	940	930	930	950	960	1,050	1,010
Merton	1,090	1,050	1,080	1,030	1,090	1,100	1,120	1,070
Newham	2,120	2,130	2,220	2,270	2,320	2,420	2,460	2,670
Redbridge	1,930	1,950	2,010	2,020	2,170	2,190	2,240	2,280
Richmond upon Thames	910	910	900	860	860	880	940	890
Sutton	1,250	1,300	1,310	1,330	1,380	1,420	1,540	1,500
Waltham Forest	1,870	1,900	1,920	1,910	1,800	1,910	1,760	1,930
London	51,620	51,420	51,810	51,800	52,810	54,440	55,080	55,750
Brent East	490	500	500	500	510	530	520	530

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual survey of teachers in service and teacher vacancies, LEA level data.
Annual School Census, Brent East data.

Full-time equivalent number of part-time teacher.

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
City of London	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	10	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Camden	150	160	160	150	200	160	150	160
Greenwich	250	250	230	230	210	210	240	240
Hackney	100	120	150	110	110	120	140	140
Hammersmith and Fulham	60	70	80	110	100	80	90	110
Islington	160	170	120	130	120	150	130	140
Kensington and Chelsea	90	80	80	60	60	60	80	70
Lambeth	210	210	220	220	160	160	160	160
Lewisham	230	230	220	240	250	270	270	270
Southwark	150	130	170	140	160	170	150	130
Tower Hamlets	180	160	220	260	200	210	240	230
Wandsworth	190	190	200	190	200	200	200	200

Full-time equivalent number of part-time teacher.

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Westminster	110	110	100	100	120	140	150	130
Barking and Dagenham	70	70	60	70	60	60	70	70
Barnet	340	310	340	350	390	340	360	350
Bexley	130	120	150	130	160	180	160	170
Brent	140	170	170	150	170	160	200	160
Bromley	200	230	230	180	270	290	300	300
Croydon	310	320	280	410	360	330	230	280
Ealing	170	220	180	170	170	190	250	190
Enfield	230	210	220	310	190	230	280	300
Haringey	150	130	140	130	120	150	150	170
Harrow	170	150	170	200	180	190	210	210
Havering	150	170	170	170	190	200	190	220
Hillingdon	150	170	150	150	170	170	170	200
Hounslow	160	170	160	160	160	180	170	170
Kingston upon Thames	110	110	120	120	120	110	120	140
Merton	120	120	110	120	120	120	130	120
Newham	70	70	70	80	100	100	110	120
Redbridge	170	180	170	180	210	190	230	230
Richmond upon Thames	160	160	170	170	180	210	150	160
Sutton	140	120	140	150	150	160	170	200
Waltham Forest	140	180	170	150	140	110	180	150
London	5,160	5,260	5,320	5,500	5,480	5,610	5,840	5,850
Brent East	30	40	50	60	60	50	50	50

Note:

[1] Nil or less than 5.

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual survey of teachers in service and teacher vacancies, LEA level data.

Annual School Census, Brent East data.

Full-time equivalent number of full and part-time teaching assistant.

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
City of London	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	10	10
Camden	200	240	250	300	360	440	470	550
Greenwich	360	400	430	510	650	650	730	750
Hackney	210	250	290	380	420	490	530	610
Hammersmith and Fulham	190	200	210	250	240	260	300	360
Islington	250	250	270	350	360	350	480	520
Kensington and Chelsea	130	140	140	170	210	220	260	270
Lambeth	300	350	390	500	560	580	640	720
Lewisham	280	290	320	410	570	470	560	620
Southwark	350	420	430	650	810	750	710	900
Tower Hamlets	370	400	450	510	800	970	950	1,070
Wandsworth	330	370	370	460	470	380	530	590
Westminster	150	170	160	190	190	310	280	330
Barking and Dagenham	300	290	310	320	400	500	510	560
Barnet	290	340	400	480	550	740	720	850
Bexley	200	230	280	310	380	320	560	550
Brent	260	300	360	390	440	450	470	560
Bromley	210	230	230	270	360	440	500	540
Croydon	400	410	510	530	660	630	870	950
Ealing	340	360	370	400	510	450	530	630
Enfield	250	290	290	500	590	810	880	970
Haringey	350	360	380	420	490	650	680	810
Harrow	270	270	290	300	300	330	430	480
Havering	170	170	200	260	300	310	520	590
Hillingdon	300	340	380	420	510	520	590	670
Hounslow	280	280	290	330	380	400	400	550
Kingston upon Thames	130	130	150	170	220	220	250	310
Merton	190	200	220	240	290	250	300	370
Newham	280	280	390	500	960	720	1,070	1,190
Redbridge	190	230	270	370	450	580	620	730
Richmond upon Thames	100	110	110	130	160	210	220	250
Button	160	170	210	230	260	340	310	370
Waltham Forest	380	400	410	470	490	610	640	670
London	8,160	8,870	9,790	11,740	14,330	15,340	17,510	19,880
Brent East	80	100	120	130	150	170	160	210

Note:

[1] Nil or less than 5.

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual School census

Teenage Conception Rates

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the conception rate per 1,000 women *(a)* aged under 18 and *(b)* aged 16 to 18 has been in each year since 1997 in (i) England and (ii) Wales; what targets she has attached to teenage conception rates; and if she will make a statement. [2276]

Beverley Hughes: Conception rates for under-16s, and 16 and 17-year-olds in England and Wales—provided by the Office for National Statistics—are included in the following table.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department of Health (DH) have joint responsibility for the Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to reduce under-18 conceptions by 50 per cent. by 2010 (from the 1998 baseline figure), as part of a broader strategy to improve sexual health. Data for 2003 shows a 9.8 per cent. reduction in under-18 conception rates since 1998.

Teenage conceptions: numbers and rates for England and Wales,1997–2003[1]

	Age under 16		*Age 16,17*		*Age under 18*	
England	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*
1997	7,707	8.8	32,756	54.9	40,463	45.5
1998	7,855	8.8	33,234	56.4	41,089	46.6
1999	7,408	8.2	31,839	54.5	39,247	44.8
2000	7,619	8.3	31,080	53.3	38,699	43.6
2001	7,407	8.0	31,054	51.7	38,461	42.5
2002	7,395	7.9	31,955	52.1	39,350	42.6
2003[1]	7,607	8.0	31,964	51.4	39,571	42.1
Wales						
1997	564	10.4	2,331	62.7	2,895	52.2
1998	597	10.8	2,433	66.0	3,030	55.0
1999	537	9.6	2,244	61.6	2,781	51.1
2000	495	8.8	2,154	59.4	2,649	48.0
2001	496	8.7	2,033	54.9	2,529	45.5
2002	480	8.3	2,121	56.4	2,601	45.9
2003[1]	469	8.2	2,143	56.9	2,612	45.7

[1] Conceptions for 2003 are provisional

Tuition Fees

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total amount of adult education fees waived by further education colleges in 2004 was. [3064]

Bill Rammell: FE providers in England are assumed to collect £260 million in fee income from learners and their employers (based on 2003/04 data). We estimate that colleges currently waive over £100 million of this at their own discretion.

University Student Secondment

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will establish a system to introduce low income students to employers who in return for a year's secondment will pay their university fees; and if she will make a statement. [2866]

Bill Rammell: There are no plans to introduce this type of system.

From September 2006 we will have in place a revised package of student financial support, which includes for new students, the introduction of a new maintenance grant of £2,700 for those students from low income households. Those in receipt of the full £2,700 maintenance grant and who are paying £3,000 for their tuition fees will be entitled to a minimum non-repayable bursary of £300.00 from their higher education institution, although many institutions will be offering much more. From 2006 students will be able to defer payment of their fees by taking out a non-means tested fee loan, which they will only start repaying once they have finished their studies and are earning over £15,000 per annum.

There are a number of initiatives aimed at stimulating closer links between employers and higher education institutions, including the new Sector Skills Agreements being developed by Sector Skills Councils. They provide an opportunity to look at ways that students can acquire higher level skills, including those from low income households. Other initiatives, including Aimhigher and the expansion of Foundation Degrees, are aimed at raising aspirations and attainments and providing new work based higher education opportunities developed with employers. We have also supported projects that promote and deliver paid secondments, work placements and work experience opportunities for higher education students.

We believe that these measures will assist students from lower income households.

Workload Agreement

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the representations received in the last three months from *(a)* schools and *(b)* local education authorities on implementation of the workload agreement. [2766]

Jacqui Smith: We receive representations from time to time on a variety of issues, including on implementation of the national agreement "Raising Standards and Tackling Workload". Where schools and LEAs need advice or guidance on implementation of the agreement they should speak in the first instance to the National Remodelling Team and its network of advisors based in LEAs throughout the country.